

The University Fieldwork Coordinators Committee of the  
Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs

Presents the

**Canadian Guidelines for Fieldwork Education  
In Occupational Therapy  
(CGFEOT)**

Guiding Principles, Responsibilities,  
Continuous Quality Improvement Process  
and Fieldwork Site Profile

Approved by UFCC, ACOTUP and CAOT  
Summer 2003,  
Revised – summer 2005

## **A Vision for Fieldwork Education Experience**

The University Fieldwork Coordinators Committee (UFCC) of the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP) has reviewed the national guidelines for fieldwork education in response to a number of developments. Feedback from fieldwork education partners, shifts in health care environments, changes in occupational therapy practice, and the new profile and core competencies of practice documents have highlighted the need to reduce administrative procedures while continuing to promote excellence in fieldwork education.

The revised Canadian Guidelines for Fieldwork Education in Occupational Therapy are consensus based and reflect current best practice in determining optimal conditions for fieldwork education. The guidelines have incorporated input from a variety of sources: consultation with fieldwork partners on the challenges of providing fieldwork education, a visioning experience by university fieldwork coordinators to identify factors for effective fieldwork, and a review of national and international documents. The UFCC acknowledges the commitment of its fieldwork partners (fieldwork sites, fieldwork educators, on site fieldwork coordinators, and other team members) in continuing to support a high quality fieldwork education program. We also thank these partners for their feedback and input during the revision process.

The national guidelines are intended to guide fieldwork partners in developing an effective environment for learning, together with fieldwork education resources and student learning opportunities. In addition, they will guide universities in determining appropriate fieldwork education experiences that enable students to integrate academic and fieldwork learning throughout their professional development.

The guidelines begin with principles guiding fieldwork education, followed by responsibilities of the main fieldwork education partners (students, fieldwork educators and university fieldwork coordinators). The final section outlines a Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO) of Learning Opportunities and Resources for each fieldwork site to complete. The FS-PRO also serves as a continuous quality improvement indicator and facilitates partnership between fieldwork education sites and university programs.

**The Canadian Occupational Therapy  
University Fieldwork Coordinators**

## Section 1: Principles Guiding the Fieldwork Education Experience

These guidelines are intended to ensure that each fieldwork experience provides excellent learning opportunities and resources and an optimum environment for learning.

Students acquire abilities and professional behaviors as well as new knowledge while engaged in fieldwork education. Students, fieldwork educators, onsite fieldwork coordinators, university professors and university fieldwork coordinators are expected to collaborate in linking fieldwork experiences to what students have learned in class. Therefore, it is important to share a common vision for fieldwork education.

### ***The fieldwork experience should:***

- Be a collaborative learning experience among students, clients, fieldwork educators, onsite fieldwork coordinators and university programs;
- Be mutually beneficial to students and fieldwork educators;
- Be accepted as an essential part of professional growth for both students and fieldwork educators;
- Occur in a positive learning environment;
- Consider the teaching methods and learning styles of both students and fieldwork educators;
- Consider students' learning objectives in relation to their professional development within the context of the fieldwork environment;
- Support students to account for their learning;
- Enable students to link theory with practice;
- Enable students to take an active role within the site;
- Promote satisfaction for both students and fieldwork educators regarding the fieldwork experience;
- Support fieldwork educators preferences for student level, timing and supervision model to facilitate an educational fit;
- Occur anywhere the roles and functions of an occupational therapist can be developed and integrated.

## **Section 2: Responsibilities of Fieldwork Education Partners**

(Primarily students, fieldwork educators and university fieldwork coordinators)

### ***Students are expected to:***

- ❑ Take responsibility for their learning experience and the direction of that experience in partnership with fieldwork educators, onsite fieldwork coordinators, university professors and fieldwork coordinators;
- ❑ Set personal and professional goals before the beginning of the fieldwork experience. Review and adjust them throughout the placement;
- ❑ Do preparatory readings before and during the fieldwork experience;
- ❑ Uphold the Codes of Ethics at all times (CAOT, professional regulatory body, fieldwork site, university program);
- ❑ Comply with site and university policies and procedures;
- ❑ Increase their understanding of and promote the roles and functions of occupational therapists;
- ❑ Increase their understanding of and respect the roles and functions of other team members;
- ❑ Learn how occupational therapists contribute to the service delivery team;
- ❑ Increase their understanding of the systems in which occupational therapists practice;
- ❑ Develop competencies for the application of the occupational therapy process;
- ❑ Develop increased confidence and competence in their practice of occupational therapy;
- ❑ Develop an interest in one or several areas of occupational therapy to guide them in designing their learning plans and career path;
- ❑ Communicate with the university fieldwork coordinator before or at mid-term if they encounter fieldwork challenges;
- ❑ Provide feedback to supervisor based on their fieldwork learning experience.

### ***Fieldwork educators are expected to:***

- ❑ Become familiar with the university fieldwork education program (learning objectives, educational tools, fieldwork evaluation tool, expected performance of student depending on placement level) and with the supervision process;
- ❑ Offer a welcoming environment, a comprehensive orientation and provide space for student use, as available within the site's resources;
- ❑ Act as role models for students;

- ❑ Offer a positive and comprehensive learning environment to enable student development within the core competencies required for occupational therapy practice;
- ❑ Clearly inform students of what is expected of them, appropriately grade responsibilities and expectations and be available to students to offer appropriate supervision;
- ❑ Offer regular and timely feedback based on student performance, including recommendations for improvement;
- ❑ Assist students to develop a good understanding of their “professional growth” and of the remaining learning objectives by allowing and promoting time for guided reflection;
- ❑ Meet with students to discuss and evaluate their performance at the mid-term and end of the fieldwork education experience;
- ❑ Communicate with the university fieldwork coordinator before or during the mid-term evaluation if the student encounters significant challenges;
- ❑ Provide to university fieldwork coordinators and students a current “Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources” (see section 3).

***University fieldwork coordinators are expected to:***

- ❑ Assist students to develop a good understanding of their “professional growth” and of their learning objectives by offering fieldwork preparation (e.g. orientation and resources) and debriefing sessions (e.g. integration of theory with practice) to students;
- ❑ Provide fieldwork educators with orientation and educational resources related to the university fieldwork education program and the supervision process;
- ❑ Coordinate offers and requests for placements and whenever possible match students and sites according to students’ academic and fieldwork profiles and interests;
- ❑ Enable students to make suitable choices in selecting fieldwork settings;
- ❑ Offer ongoing support and problem solving to students and fieldwork educators in dealing with student learning challenges;
- ❑ Recognize fieldwork partners who contribute time and expertise in supervising students;
- ❑ Provide sites with a fieldwork agreement, either temporary or long term, describing the liability and responsibilities of each party;
- ❑ Ensure students are provided with appropriate liability coverage;
- ❑ Regularly assess the content and quality of supervision given and provide recommendations to fieldwork sites and feedback to fieldwork educators.

### **Section 3:**

## **Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources Partnership Process and Continuous Quality Improvement Indicators**

University fieldwork coordinators require information about fieldwork education sites regarding opportunities and resources for student learning. The main goal of this process is to promote excellence in fieldwork education among partners as well as to fulfill the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) requirements\* for Academic Accreditation.

The information included in the FS-PRO will assist university fieldwork coordinators and students in making informed decisions about placement selection. They may achieve a balanced student fieldwork profile while meeting their learning needs.

This information will also be used for the partnership renewal process, which is described on page 7, by university fieldwork coordinators.

### **Nature of Information Required**

As per the attached form, “Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources”, fieldwork educators, with their colleagues and manager, are expected to provide information about:

- Site and Contact Information
- Characteristics of Occupational Therapy Services
- Learning Opportunities and Resources
- Administrative Resources
- Amenities
- Site Requirements for Students
- Messages to Students

When available, supporting material about the fieldwork site, the various programs and the occupational therapy services offered should be attached to the profile.

\* For example, therapists must have at least one year of professional experience prior to supervising students.

### **Frequency and Process of Information Updates**

To ensure the highest levels of quality in fieldwork education, the following quality improvement steps are recommended:

1. University fieldwork coordinator will review all FS-PRO documents at minimum every 5 years.
2. University fieldwork coordinator will communicate with each site's contact person.
3. The FS-PRO update will be requested within a reasonable timeframe, which will be determined by both the contact person and the university fieldwork coordinator.
4. Once the information has been reviewed, the university fieldwork coordinator and the site's contact-person will provide each other with feedback.
5. A timeframe will be set between the university and the site if improvements are to be made to ensure the best quality of the fieldwork experience for students.

The FS-PRO will be the primary continuous quality improvement method. As an additional means of ensuring quality, it is recommended that:

- Students provide the site with feedback at the end of every placement.
- Students complete a written "evaluation of placement" form which is submitted to the university fieldwork coordinator.
- University fieldwork coordinators compile student feedback and share it with fieldwork sites at the time of site-university partnership renewal.

Depending upon specific needs and programs developed, it is anticipated that each university will be responsible for designing and implementing additional continuous quality improvement methods that are deemed appropriate for their region.

# Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources

*Please fill in and return to your affiliated university occupational therapy program.*

## Site and Contact Information

Name of site: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of program/sector: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\*: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax\*: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Web site: \_\_\_\_\_

- Supporting material about the site and occupational therapy services attached  
(e.g. pamphlet, brochure, fact sheet)

*\*of contact person*

If you have any questions or comments, please contact your university representative:

Label with name and contact information of UFC  
(Suggested font: Arial 11)

A member of the University Fieldwork Coordinators Committee (UFCC), a sub-committee of the  
Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP)

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

# Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources

*Copy and complete for individual location or program as appropriate.*

Name of program / site: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(if different from page 1):*

Contact information if different from page one:

Location of occupational therapy services in the building:

## Characteristics of Occupational Therapy Services:

1. Occupational therapy services are organized on:  an O.T. department basis  a program basis  
 No O.T. on site  other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Description (e.g. the mission and vision of your organization, occupational therapy philosophy and role of occupational therapy within your organization):*

2. System(s) / services in which you practice:  Public sector  Private practice
- |  |  |                                       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient clinic | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long term care centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Home care         | <input type="checkbox"/> Day hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Community setting | <input type="checkbox"/> School       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____          |  |                                       |

3. Occupational therapy roles:  Direct care  Indirect care  Consultation  Research  
 Administration  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Client life span:  Children  Adolescents  Adults  Older adults

### Characteristics of Occupational Therapy Services (continued):

5. Client conditions:     Mental health     Physical health     Combined     Other

*Please list common client issues:*

6. Occupational therapy focus:

*Please describe common areas of practice, interventions and programs:*

7. Hours of operations: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Total number of occupational therapists working at/for your site:

Full Time: \_\_\_\_\_     Part Time: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Support personnel (e.g. OTAide, rehab assistant)?  yes     no    If yes, how many: \_\_\_\_\_

## Learning Opportunities and Resources for Students:

1. Access to a library (either on or off-site) :  yes  no
2. Internet access:  yes  no
3. Other learning opportunities and resources for students (*please list*):

*(e.g. interprofessional contacts, field trips, resource binders):*

4. Please state your general learning and performance expectations of students (other than the ones from the University) to assist them in preparing for fieldwork education at your site.

## Administrative Resources:

1. Orientation session offered upon students arrival:

yes  no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Space and resources available to students (phone, desk, workstation, etc.):

3. Policies and procedures information available:

yes, location: \_\_\_\_\_

no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Health and safety policy in place:

yes  no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Emergency procedures information available:

yes, location: \_\_\_\_\_

no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Contingency plan available (for absent fieldwork educator during placement):

no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

yes. Please outline its major characteristics:

### Administrative Resources (continued):

7. Continuing education plan in place for occupational therapists on site:

no, it will be available on (*specify date*): \_\_\_\_\_

yes. Please outline its major characteristics:

*Please outline your site's continuing education policy or describe how occupational therapists remain current in issues that impact their professional practice. Also, describe use of evidence based practice:*

### Amenities Available to Students:

1. Cafeteria:  yes  no

2. Kitchen facilities:  microwave oven  refrigerator  other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Locker:  yes  no

4. Bicycle rack:  yes  no

5. Parking:  yes, cost: \_\_\_\_\_  no

6. Public transportation available:  yes  no

7. Other (*please list*):

*(e.g. accommodation for students)*

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

### Site Requirements for Students:

1. Immunization:  yes  no If yes, specify in box below.
2. Criminal / police record check:  yes  no If yes, specify in box below.
3. Dress code:  yes  no If yes, specify in box below.
4. A car is required during placement hours:  yes  no  
 If yes, describe the site "gas reimbursement" policy for OT students, in the box below.

Please specify additional information and/or requirements (e.g. mask fit testing):

### Message to Students:

*Please add anything else you would like students to know or prepare for prior to starting a placement at your site.*

- Pre-placement information package sent to student (e.g. reading list or material, schedule):  yes  no

### Signatures:

Profile completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and title)

My organization wishes to offer placements to occupational therapy students from:

- my affiliated University     Canadian universities     International O.T. programs

For fieldwork education purposes, I hereby authorize my affiliated university occupational therapy program to forward the information included in the FS-PRO to students and fieldwork coordinators from other occupational therapy programs.

I shall ensure that students will be supervised by qualified occupational therapists who have a minimum of one year of professional experience, and hold credentials with their provincial regulatory body.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Fieldwork Site Profile (FS-PRO): Learning Opportunities and Resources**

*Reflection and feedback form for partnership renewal*

Name of program / site: \_\_\_\_\_

*The contents of this page will not be shared with students.*

Site representatives will be provided with feedback on their fieldwork education program by the university fieldwork coordinator every 5 years. Fieldwork educators are asked to reflect on this feedback and their own experiences with their fieldwork education program, and then to complete the following form. The information obtained will be used as a basis for discussion by the university fieldwork coordinator and the site representative. The ongoing exchange of this nature will facilitate quality improvement and ongoing partnership in fieldwork education.

## **Areas for Improvement**

*(Upon renewal and/or update of FS-PRO)*

1. Comment on or suggest improvement to the university's fieldwork education program:

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which area of your fieldwork education program needs to be developed and/or improved in order to optimize the overall fieldwork experience?

3. What objectives and plan of action will you be pursuing to improve identified areas?

Form completed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and title)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

## National and International Documents

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations, (2000). Essential Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada. ACOTRO.

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), (1989). Proceedings of the Occupational Therapy National Fieldwork Symposium. CAOT.

CAOT, (1996). Code of Ethics. CAOT.

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CAOT, ACOTUP (1999). Fieldwork Education Site Approval Program. CAOT/ACOTUP.

CAOT, (2002). Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada. CAOT.

World Federation of Occupational Therapists, (2002). Revised Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists. WFOT.

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