

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FIELDWORK NEWS

Penn State DuBois OTA Program

Fall 2017

Welcome to the first edition of the PSU DuBois OTA “Fieldwork News”. The purpose of this newsletter is to better engage clinical educators with the program, campus faculty and to provide adequate education and support to promote optimal outcomes for student clinical experiences.

Meet the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC):

Amy Fatula, M.Ed., COTA/L, ATP

My name is Amy Fatula. I have been involved in the OTA program in various capacities since 2007. I became a full-time instructor and academic fieldwork coordinator in Summer 2012. I have earned my Master’s Degree in Education in 2010 and certification as an Assistive Technology Professional in 2007.

I am always available to students and clinicians during completion of FW. I am a resource to facilitate communication, offer strategies for facilitating learning, and remediate student performance for successful completion of all experiences.

OTA Fieldwork at PSU DuBois

The current requirement for OTA students enrolled in the program is as follows:

Fall (semester #3): 20 hours level I - traditional clinical placement

Spring (semester #4): 20 hours level I - traditional clinical placement

Spring (semester #4): Faculty directed level I psychosocial experience

Fall (semester #5): 16 weeks level II



The PSU DuBois OTA program is accredited by ACOTE through 2024. There are specific standards that the program is bound to address throughout the curriculum to maintain accreditation. Based on the current standards implemented in 2011, there are 19 FW related standards to be addressed. This newsletter will be a communication tool to facilitate campus and clinic communication and compliance with the standards.

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- Role of the OTAS in Evaluation/Data Gathering
- How to Incorporate EBP into the OTAS FW Experience.
- FAQ/Resources



PSU Nittany Lion was supporting OT at the 2017 POTA Conference in State College, PA.



OTA Students gather occupational profile information from a client during a service-learning experience in OT 103.

Role of the OTAS in Evaluation and Data Gathering

According to the *PA Occupational Therapy Code*, Chapter 42, in the Minimum Standards of Practice, section 42.22 it states:

“The supervisor may assign to a competent occupational therapy assistant the administration of standardized tests, the performance of activities of daily living evaluations and other elements of patient/client evaluation and reevaluation that do not require the professional judgment and skill of an occupational therapist.”

Additionally, Section 3, items #7-11 of the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation specifically require that the OTA student (OTAS) be assessed on their ability gather data, administer assessments, report results and collaborate on goals.

Based on the above information, it is imperative that OTA students have the opportunity to observe these activities on level I FW and develop these skills and competencies while completing level II FW.

As fieldwork educators, it is your role to develop learning experiences to prepare the level II OTAS for entry-level practice. Over the years, supervisors have expressed concerns about facility policies limiting OTA involvement in assessment/evaluation, therefore limiting what an OTAS can participate in.

In response to these concerns, it has been recommended that clinics reassess their OTAs’ role in assessment and allow OTAs to participate in tasks directed under state guidelines or provide opportunities for OTAS simulation of assessment on staff. Often in discussion with educators it is found that the students are doing assessment/data gathering and it is not being considered during performance evaluation such as: chart reviews, FIM/assist level assessments or client interviews.



Need assessment information or resources?

Go to:

[Rehabilitation Measures](#)

On this site you are able to search online resources for assessments based on diagnosis or client types. Often there are links directly to the assessment tool.

Many assessments are free and ready for use.



Faculty and students completed balance assessments at a community senior health event.

PSU DuBois OTA students are introduced to several assessments throughout the curriculum.

A few include:

- Goniometry
- Strength Testing
- Timed Up and Go
- Functional Reach
- Mini-Mental State Exam
- ACLS
- Client Interviews

2017

Fieldwork Educators Continuing Education Opportunity

In response to the decreased ability for clinicians to attend the yearly on-campus FW Workshop, an online continuing education module was created to offer free contact hours related to a FW topic.

The 2017 module was created to address Evidence-Based Practice in OTA FW education.

Participants have the opportunity to earn up to 3 contact hours. There are 3 tasks to complete (each for 1 contact hour). All 3 do not have to be completed.

The module is a Google page and a free Google account is required.

Participation is self-paced, and once the survey is submitted a certificate for contact hours will be provided.

The module can be accessed through this link:

[PSU DuBois OTA Online Fieldwork Module 2017](#)



How to Incorporate EBP into the OTAS FW Experience

As stated in the AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation form item #6, an OTA student is assessed on their ability to: “Make informed practice decisions based on published research and relevant informational resources.”

As indicated in the previous section on assessments, many clinics question how they can assess an OTA level student on this ability.

This dilemma was the catalyst for the development of the online workshop module (see left column). In this module, EBP practice is reviewed as well as the OTA program educational standards. By reviewing this information and reflecting upon your own understanding and application of evidence in your practice, you can begin to develop criteria by which an OTA student in your setting can demonstrate this competence. There are several options that I have suggested to clinical educators in the past, they include:

- ◆ Encouraging a student to “look up” answers to questions they ask to facilitate active learning. This does not mean ignoring their requests or distancing yourself as an educator, but it is an opportunity for the student to find their evidence.
- ◆ Create an assignment that requires the student to incorporate evidence. For example, when completing a case study, ask the student to provide evidence-based resources to substantiate the clinical decisions made for the client.
- ◆ Choose a specific treatment or modality used in your clinic and ask the student to locate evidence supporting the use with particular client types.
- ◆ Conduct monthly OT evidence discussion groups in your department. Assign the student to present during their rotation.

Don't forget.....with your NBCOT certification/registration you have FREE access to the ProQuest online database of evidence-based articles.

Frequently Asked Questions:



- ◆ What experience is needed to be a fieldwork educator?

Per ACOTE standard C.1.14, the supervisor must be a currently licensed OTR/OTA who has a minimum of 1 year full-time practice experience and is prepared to serve as an educator.

- ◆ What is the time requirement for a student's level II experience?

Per ACOTE standard C.1.13, the OTA student must complete 16 weeks of full-time level II fieldwork. There is no longer a strict 320 hour rule per 8 weeks. The student must complete hours consistent with full-time employment for the site. If there are concerns about hours, contact the AFWC to discuss options for completion.

Additional OT Practice Resources:

Use this free [OT profile template](#) provided by AOTA to gather client information using the terminology found in the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 3rd Edition* (AOTA, 2014).

Earn free CEU's and learn more about Medicare at:

[Medicare Learning Network](#)

PSU DuBois Library has created a library guide for EBP for use by students (full access) and clinical educators (limited access)

[PSU DuBois Library OTA Resources](#)

Contact Us

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Visit our [program website](#)

(see link for fieldwork resources)