What is Fieldwork?

Fieldwork is a term used by the occupational therapy profession to describe course work that takes place within the professional work setting. Hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, school systems, and community agencies may be utilized to help develop a student’s professional skills. Fieldwork allows students an opportunity to apply the course work to a practical setting. Within the curriculum at WITC, students take Fieldwork I third semester and Fieldwork IIA and Fieldwork IIB fourth semester.

Level I Fieldwork

Fieldwork I is offered in the third semester (fall) of the OTA program. Students meet on campus prior to the start of Level I Fieldwork for a mandatory orientation. Students meet on campus the last week of the semester for a mandatory reflection/follow up session.

Fieldwork I consists of two patient-centered rotations. One fieldwork experience has as its focus psychological and social factors that influence engagement in occupation. This is a requirement of ACOTE (C.1.7). Psychosocial placements are in community based settings or memory care facilities. Students will complete the psychosocial placement in a community setting with other OTA students and a WITC faculty member. This rotation is 16 hours.

The other Fieldwork I experience is in a traditional occupational therapy setting where students are supervised by an OT Practitioner and observe provision of occupational therapy services. This rotation is 21 hours.

Fieldwork I also has 2 required days on one of the WITC campuses. All 3rd semester OTA students meet at one location where the focus is on community occupational therapy and better serving a variety of clients.

According to The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), the fieldwork experience is designed to “enrich didactic course work for the purpose of directed observation and participation in selected fieldwork settings.” The goal of the experience is to develop observation and interviewing skills, and enhance the understanding of the developmental stages, tasks, and roles of individuals throughout the life span and in different practice settings.

Students may be required to travel approximately two hours from their WITC campus to complete Level I fieldwork. Placement depends upon available sites and availability of clinical educators. Students will be given the contact names of their Fieldwork I Educators and Fieldwork Sites prior to the start of third semester.
Level II Fieldwork
Fieldwork IIA and Fieldwork IIB takes place fourth semester. Each course is 5 credits and includes 8 weeks of full-time experience. Students work full-time for 8 weeks in each setting while under the supervision of an occupational therapy practitioner. Students gain skill and competency in the areas of evaluation, intervention, communication, and professional behavior. Expectations are for the student to have entry level employment skills following completion of the two courses. Placement will be in two different treatment settings, representing a range of diagnoses, ages, and treatment models. The student will implement academic knowledge into the clinical setting. This may be anywhere as no local placements are able to be guaranteed.

A minimum of 16 weeks’ of full-time Level II fieldwork is required. This may be completed on a part-time basis as long as it is at least 50% of an FTE at that site.

If a student or facility requests, Level II fieldwork may be completed on a part time basis. This is possible if both parties (student and facility) agree and as long as the fieldwork is at least 50% of a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at that site. For one rotation, this option requires more than 8 weeks to meet the requirements, as the full time equivalent needs to be met. This option would be planned and confirmed when fieldwork placements are given to the student.

*Students can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of three different settings. This is not possible in all settings, and is dependent upon fieldwork educator and fieldwork setting availability.