

Practice Advisory: Services Provided by Students in Fieldwork Level II Settings

Level II fieldwork students may provide occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in compliance with state and federal regulations. When adhering to the principles stated below, along with other regulatory and payer requirements, AOTA considers that students at this level of education are providing skilled occupational therapy intervention.

General Principles:

- a. Supervision of occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students in Fieldwork Level II settings should ensure protection of consumers and provide opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice.
- b. To ensure safe and effective occupational therapy services, it is the responsibility of the supervising occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant to recognize when supervision is needed and ensure that supervision supports the student's current and developing levels of competence with the occupational therapy process.
- c. In all cases the occupational therapist is ultimately responsible for all aspects of occupational therapy service delivery and is accountable for the safety and effectiveness of the occupational therapy service delivery process. This would include provision of services provided by an occupational therapy assistant student under the supervision of an occupational therapy assistant (see Addendum 1).
- d. Initially, supervision should be in line of sight and gradually decrease to less direct supervision as is appropriate depending on the (ACOTE, 2007a.; b.& c.):
 - 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.

In settings where occupational therapy practitioners¹ are employed:

- Occupational therapy students should be supervised by an occupational therapist.
- Occupational therapy assistant students should be supervised by an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant in partnership with an occupational therapist.

In settings where occupational therapy practitioners are not employed:

- Students should be supervised by another professional familiar with the role of occupational therapy in collaboration with an occupational therapy practitioner.

¹ When the term *occupational therapy practitioner* is used in this document, it refers to both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants (AOTA, 2006).

References:

- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007a). Accreditation standards for a doctoral-degree-level educational program for the occupational therapist. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 641–651.
- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007b). Accreditation standards for a master's-degree-level educational program for the occupational therapist. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 652–661.
- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007c). Accreditation standards for an educational program for the occupational therapy assistant. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 662–671.
- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2006). Policy 1.44: Categories of occupational therapy personnel. In *Policy manual* (2009 ed., pp. 33–34). Bethesda, MD: Author
- American Occupational Therapy Association (2009). *Guidelines for Supervision, Roles, and Responsibilities During the Delivery of Occupational Therapy Services*. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(November/December).

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Addendum 1:

Supervision Requirements and Responsibilities for Occupational Therapy Assistant Students During the Delivery of Occupational Therapy Services.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) asserts that occupational therapy assistants can provide supervision to occupational therapy assistant students completing level II fieldwork experiences. The following recommendations have been developed to ensure the delivery of safe and effective occupational therapy services and appropriate supervisory requirements:

- *ACOTE Standards (ACOTE, 2007,c) indicate that an occupational therapy assistant with a minimum of 1-year professional experience is qualified to be the fieldwork educator in order to teach and assess the skills of the occupational therapy assistant student.*

And,

- *The purpose of the level II fieldwork experience is to provide the student with the opportunity to enact the occupational therapy skills that they have been taught during the didactic portion of their occupational therapy assistant training program.*

And,

- *The occupational therapy assistant is equipped to role model the skills and behaviors of their level of practice while interacting with the occupational therapy assistant student in the clinic setting.*

And,

- *The occupational therapy assistant possesses skills and knowledge of practice fundamentals that include: professional behaviors, interpersonal skills, safety, ethics, documentation, occupational therapist/occupational therapy assistant collaborative relationship, implementing a treatment plan, and delegated assessments*

And,

- *The licensure laws governing the practice of occupational therapy of many states allow the occupational therapy assistant to supervise the occupational therapy assistant student as a fieldwork educator.*

And,

- *In all cases the occupational therapist is ultimately responsible for all aspects of occupational therapy service delivery and is accountable for the safety and effectiveness of the occupational therapy service delivery process. This would include provision of services provided by an occupational therapy assistant student under the supervision of an occupational therapy assistant*

And,

- *The level of supervision including the need for “line of sight” should be at the discretion of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant consulting together to determine the student's competence, needs of the client, setting, and other variables delineated above.*

And,

- *Co-signatures of the supervising occupational therapy assistant and/or occupational therapist on documentation indicates that the occupational therapy assistant student is provided with the appropriate level of supervision and is deemed competent to perform documented therapeutic intervention*

And,

- *When a student provides skilled occupational therapy services under the supervision of a qualified practitioner those services are billed as services provided by the supervising licensed occupational therapy practitioner.*

And,

- *An occupational therapist would offer the occupational therapy assistant student the opportunity to observe the process of client evaluation, development and modification of a treatment plan, and specific interventions that are within the scope of practice for an occupational therapist, or in which an occupational therapist has specialty training. These additional learning opportunities are beneficial but may not be representative of entry level occupational therapy assistant practice.*

Therefore,

- *An occupational therapy assistant, under the appropriate supervision of an occupational therapist, and in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, who has a minimum of 1-year clinical experience and who has demonstrated competence as a practitioner and a fieldwork educator should be allowed to supervise an occupational therapy assistant student during level II fieldwork.*

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2007c). Accreditation standards for an educational program for the occupational therapy assistant. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 662–671.