

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 prior to the start of Level I Fieldwork for a mandatory orientation and then the last week of the semester for a mandatory reflection/follow up session.

Fieldwork I consists of work in psychosocial, nontraditional, and emerging practice areas. The focus of the psychosocial fieldwork experience is to explore how psychological and social factors 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 with other OTA students and a WITC fieldwork educator. This rotation is 12 hours.

The focus of the nontraditional fieldwork experience is to provide an opportunity to apply the skills learned throughout the OT coursework to a role outside of the OT field. Students will complete this placement with other OTA students under the supervision of a WITC fieldwork educator. This rotation is 12 hours. Another part of this nontraditional experience will include community and wellness education. These additional experiences reflect curricular threads of the OTA program.

The final focus of level I fieldwork is the emerging practice area of clinical simulation. This rotation will consist of comprehensive learning with simulation of case studies. Students will have to problem solve and demonstrate clinical reasoning to move through the experiences. This rotation is facilitated by the WITC fieldwork educator and is 24 hours.

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.**

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 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.