

Northwood Technical College  
Occupational Therapy Assistant  
Fieldwork Handbook

**Guidelines and Professional Standards for Fieldwork Students**

**Students are to be punctual.** Students are to demonstrate arrival to the facility five to ten minutes before starting time. Students are asked to plan extra time for parking and finding the location.

**Students are to set priorities.** When students are at fieldwork, they should view Level I Fieldwork/Level II Fieldwork as a top priority. Students should complete assignments on time. Students are advised not to wait until the last minute to request access to patients or information needed to complete assignments. Students are advised that fieldwork is not the place to do other schoolwork or deal with personal concerns.

**Students are to dress professionally.** Students are to follow Health Science Professional Expectations Dress Code found in OTA Student Handbook. Students may follow the Dress Code of the fieldwork setting if this is initiated by the Fieldwork Educator. Fieldwork Educators: please identify/locate this information for the student if you would like them to follow your dress code.

**Students are to be responsible.** It is the student's responsibility to follow all facility-specific requirements, including safety procedures. Fieldwork Educators: please identify/locate this information for the student.

**Students are to demonstrate confidentiality.** Confidentiality of patients/clients and staff must be maintained. Students are advised not to talk "about" patients/clients/staff in front of them. Students are to ask their fieldwork educator at the first session how they wish to handle student questions.

**Students are to act responsibly.** Students are to demonstrate professional behavior and attitude. No personal cell phone use is allowed. Students are representing themselves, Northwood Tech, and the occupational therapy profession.

**Students are to be prepared.** Students are to provide the Fieldwork Educator with some information on the first visit. The student should be able to discuss what OTA courses they have had and what courses they are currently enrolled in. The students have prepared to identify their strengths and weaknesses related to clinical performance. Students should share Strengthfinder and Myers Briggs results.

**Students should initiate a plan for question/discussion time with the Fieldwork Educator.**

Time is very valuable in the clinical setting and therapists are typically very busy. The student is encouraged to plan with the fieldwork educator when to address questions that arise during fieldwork. Some therapists are willing to answer questions as they arise; others prefer to wait until patients are not present.

**Students are encouraged to be observers.** Students are encouraged to pay close attention to everything that is seen and to write down questions that occur. The Fieldwork Educator likely expects students to have clinical questions. The student is encouraged to demonstrate an attentive and interested attitude at all times.

**Students are to be respectful.** Students should be courteous to staff members and patients. They are encouraged to thank each person who allows them to learn. Once fieldwork is finished, the student is expected to send a Thank You note to their Fieldwork Educator.

**Students should demonstrate a positive outlook.** The student is advised to correct their performance in response to a Fieldwork Educator's feedback. The student should be prepared to correct notes, modify intervention skills, and change the performance of certain tasks without getting defensive. Students are to receive feedback positively. Feedback allows a student to modify performance or behavior to elicit changes responsive to the Fieldwork Educator's expectations. If a student is not receiving feedback, the student is encouraged to ask their Fieldwork Educator whether improvement of skills or behaviors is needed to achieve performance expectations. Students are advised that they are in the fieldwork setting to learn, and should use each bit of information provided by the Fieldwork Educator to improve their clinical skills and behavior. The Fieldwork Educator should learn from the student what they want to gain from the fieldwork experience. The student is encouraged to be willing to try new things and communicate this to the Fieldwork Educator.

**Students are encouraged to be strong communicators.** The student is responsible for communicating their needs and expectations to the Fieldwork Educator. The student is responsible for using feedback from the Fieldwork Educator to improve performance. A student's communication with their Fieldwork Educator will be one of the most important aspects of the fieldwork experience.

Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve conflict directly with the Fieldwork Educator before contacting the Northwood Tech Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Students/Fieldwork Educators need to call the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator immediately with ethical or professional concerns. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will be available by phone or email to answer any questions. Concerning non-ethical questions/concerns and questions relating to non-conflict: students are advised to demonstrate self-initiative by trying to research/solve and answers/problems on their own. Should questions remain, it is advised for the student to attempt to come up with a solution, and then ask the Fieldwork Educator if the idea is "on track".

**Students are encouraged to be enthusiastic.** Fieldwork Educators invest time and energy in preparing for fieldwork students, and these efforts should be appreciated by students.

**Students should be flexible.** Often last-minute changes do occur and students are advised to be prepared to step up to a new challenge or reschedule the activity/treatment they were ready to present. Students should always have a “Plan B”.

**Students need to display honesty.** Students must be honest with their Fieldwork Educator. For example, if a student is asked if they have learned a technique in class, they should be honest. It is okay if the student recalls the topic, but doesn’t feel comfortable with the skill. A student needs to share this with the Fieldwork Educator. The student should get clarification about unknown situations rather than enter into one unprepared.

**Students should be accepting of the information and experiences provided by the Fieldwork Educator.** The role of the Fieldwork Educator is encouraged to assign additional assignments as appropriate to engage the student in enrichment activities relative to the current placement. The students are asked to view each learning offering (assignment) as an “opportunity” to try new skills and behaviors that will be valuable in becoming an occupational therapy assistant.

Adapted from: Creating a Positive Level I Fieldwork Experience, Meyers, Swinehart, AOTA