The OT Program reserves the right to update the policies in this handbook at any time to reflect the changing nature of healthcare and education during the course of the program.
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Section One – General Information

Overview

The Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program at the University of Southern Maine includes the opportunity for students to engage in five separate fieldwork experiences throughout the curriculum. Students will complete three level I experiences, which occur concurrently with their coursework. These experiences take place in both community and clinical settings, highlighting traditional and non-traditional sites for occupational therapy.

Students are required to complete two 12-week level II fieldwork experiences at the completion of their coursework. Level II fieldwork experiences are supervised by an occupational therapist that meets the standards as outlined by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) and provide an intensive application of the knowledge learned throughout the program. The MOT program maintains active Agreements with a variety of sites locally, nationally, and internationally.

Fieldwork Sequence

Year One: Spring Semester

OTH 509 Level I Fieldwork: Mental Health
Students are provided opportunities in a variety of clinical and community settings where they can begin to develop professional behaviors, communication skills, and skilled observation in a psychosocial setting. The accompanying seminar allows students to share and process their experiences as a group. The combination of direct fieldwork experience plus an integrated seminar allows students to further integrate course material and provide a common link between associated classes. All courses in the MOT curriculum must be completed with a minimum of a “B-”. Cr 1.

Year Two: Fall Semester

OTH 510 Level I Fieldwork: Populations
Students are provided opportunities in a variety of clinical and community settings where they can begin to develop professional behaviors, communication skills, and skilled observation in varied practice settings. The accompanying seminar allows students to share and process their experiences as a group. The combination of direct fieldwork experience plus an integrated seminar allows students to further integrate course material and provide a common link between associated classes. Pre-requisites: All courses in the MOT curriculum must be completed with a minimum of a “B-”. Cr 1.

Year Two: Spring Semester

OTH 511 Level I Fieldwork: Community Practice
Students are provided opportunities in a variety of clinical and community settings
where they can begin to develop professional behaviors, communication skills, and skilled observation in varied practice settings. The accompanying seminar allows students to share and process their experiences as a group. The combination of direct fieldwork experience plus an integrated seminar allows students to further integrate course material and provide a common link between associated classes. All courses in the MOT curriculum must be completed with a minimum of a “B-”. Cr 1.

**OTH 620 First Level II Fieldwork**

This fieldwork requirement is a minimum 12-week, full-time, and supervised experience in an occupational therapy setting or emerging practice area. Students are expected to participate in practical experiences that promote the application of theoretical knowledge and practice skills with clients who are experiencing occupational deficits due to a variety of conditions or disorders increasing their caseload throughout the 12 weeks to demonstrate entry-level practitioner skills in that setting. Formal evaluation and direct supervision appropriate to the setting is provided by a licensed occupational therapist. Pre-requisites: All courses in the MOT curriculum must be completed with a minimum of a “B-”. Cr 6.

**Year Three: Fall Semester**

**OTH 621 Final Level II Fieldwork**

This fieldwork requirement is a minimum 12-week, full-time, and supervised experience in an occupational therapy setting or emerging practice area. Students are expected to participate in practical experiences that promote the application of theoretical knowledge and practice skills with clients who are experiencing occupational deficits due to a variety of conditions or disorders increasing their caseload throughout the 12 weeks to demonstrate entry-level practitioner skills in that setting. Formal evaluation and direct supervision appropriate to the setting is provided by a licensed occupational therapist. Pre-requisites: All courses in the MOT curriculum must be completed with a minimum of a “B-”. Cr 6.

**Fieldwork Sites**

Fieldwork experiences are integrated into the occupational therapy curriculum at the University of Southern Maine. The USM MOT faculty, Fieldwork Educators, and students are mutually involved in the process. The occupational therapy program evaluates and selects fieldwork sites according to specific criteria that meet the needs of the curriculum and to assure that the site is able to provide adequate supervision and experiences to enable the student to successfully meet the standards of the Accreditation Commission for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).

The scope of fieldwork sites ranges from traditional settings in pediatrics, geriatrics, physical disabilities and mental health, to emerging practice settings in community health and wellness programs. All sites utilized for student fieldwork meet the requirements and learning objectives of the curriculum. A contractual agreement is established and maintained between the University of Southern Maine and each site. The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) and fieldwork educators collaborate on
objectives and the advising of students.

**Out of State Sites, SARA and Licensing**

The following section is for informational purposes ONLY. You will need to work with the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator for all out of state placements and required paperwork.

During Level II Fieldwork, some students elect to travel out of state for their fieldwork. State laws require permission for out-of-state students to participate in on-site educational experiences. Many states are part of the [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)](https://www.sara-pta.org), which is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. If the state in which you intend to complete your fieldwork experience is a SARA state, you do not need to submit any additional paperwork. To see participating states, please click [here](https://www.sara-pta.org).

For students wishing to complete a fieldwork experience in a non-SARA state, an out-of-state authorization form must be completed with the office of Community Engagement and Career Development. Please complete the [State Authorization Form](mailto:paula.spyropulos@maine.edu) and send to paula.spyropulos@maine.edu for forwarding to the UMS state authorization staff member. NOTE: Prior authorization can take 8-12 weeks, so plan ahead.

SARA does not cover approval for licensed professions and does not handle professional licensing board approval. Students must seek out individual state licensing requirements for occupational therapy practice, as requirements may vary from state to state. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) has resources available to assist you in obtaining a license in a particular state. For more information on obtaining state licensure, please click [here](https://www.aota.org).

**Student Responsibilities for Fieldwork Site Compliance**

Fieldwork site compliance includes all university requirements (i.e. health insurance) as well as any individual site requirements for immunizations, background checks, drug screening, etc. All students are required to have health insurance throughout the MOT program, either through the USM insurance plan or a private insurance plan.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete all immunizations and other fieldwork site requirements before their Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences begin. Some of the site requirements are above and beyond those required for attending USM. **As of April 1, 2017, the USM MOT program requires use of CastleBranch for all compliance tracking of immunizations, background checks, and drug screens.**

The MOT Program will be using CastleBranch for site requirements compliance tracking, drug screens, and background checks. All requirements have been previously
established with CastleBranch - students simply need to login and select the appropriate package. The CastleBranch website for USM can be found here: https://portal.castlebranch.com/ua87.

The student is responsible for all costs associated with all of the items required by the site, including immunizations, background checks, fingerprinting, and drug screens. It is important that students budget for obtaining all required documentation and/or immunizations/tests in a timely manner, in order to begin the fieldwork process.

Failure to provide health and immunizations information and other site requirements in a timely manner may prevent the student from participating in fieldwork placements. Completion of these site requirements must be finalized prior to the site assignment and by the timeframe set by the MOT program. All costs associated with the site requirements are the responsibility of the student.

It is the student’s responsibility to provide the required documentation directly to the site prior to beginning their fieldwork experience. USM does not share this information with the fieldwork site.

The following are the minimum documentation requirements:

- **CPR certification** (renewable every 2 years)
  - CPR certification should be specifically for healthcare professionals and cover infants, children and adults. This certification is a blended offering, both online and in person. See offerings from the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross.

- **Immunization records**
  - Measles
  - Mumps
  - Rubella - German Measles
    - Two doses of measles, mumps and rubella given after (not on) the 1st birthday and given after December 31, 1956.
    - You may have titers completed if you are unable to get a copy of your vaccination records.
  - Varicella - proof of vaccine or proof of prior infection (on letterhead from your provider’s office)

- **PPD** (Tuberculosis Skin Test) - within one year of fieldwork start date

- **Tetanus**
  - One dose of Tetanus/Diphtheria (TD) or Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) within the last 10 years
- **Hepatitis B** (vaccinations or signature to waive)
  - Please note: This vaccination series (3-4 shots) can take up to 7 months to complete

- **Influenza Vaccine**
  - For the current flu season (August through March) - updated each year

- **Criminal Background Check** - This may need to be completed more than one time over the course of all fieldwork experiences, as some sites request completion within 6 months prior to the student start date. Please note that these core components must be included for current and previous names and addresses:
  - Criminal background check - national, state, and counties of residence both inside and outside of Maine
  - Sex Offender Index
  - Nationwide healthcare fraud & abuse search (OIG/GSA)
  - Social Security Alert
  - Background check requirements have been previously established through CastleBranch. Please be sure to utilize CastleBranch for processing this, as instant online background checks usually do not meet the above criteria and will not meet the many site requirements.

- **Fingerprinting**: This is a two-step process (with two separate fees). Students need to be fingerprinted at an approved site and then must submit an application for a fingerprint card through the Department of Education. If you do not have a SS number, this process requires additional steps and will take longer. [http://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/fingerprinting/approval-instructions.html](http://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/fingerprinting/approval-instructions.html)

- **Drug Screens**: Some healthcare sites require drug screens. This is the only item that you may wait to complete after you receive your site assignment. This usually needs to be completed at least one month before your assignment begins. This can be ordered and completed through CastleBranch [https://portal.castlebranch.com/ua87](https://portal.castlebranch.com/ua87)

Some FW sites require additional certifications or immunizations along with the above requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure compliance with all fieldwork site requirements. **A fieldwork site may add or change a requirement at any time. The student is expected to comply with any change in requirements immediately.** Information regarding site requirements may be found in E*Value and obtained from the AFWC. It is critical that requirements are confirmed with the site during the student’s initial contact with the Fieldwork Educator (FWE)/site contact.

Site requirements are reviewed for compliance prior to each FW experience. Fieldwork sites may cancel your fieldwork if your documentation is not shared in a timely manner. In order to be timely, acquiring all information and scheduling medical visits if needed, must be started at least two months before your scheduled start of Level II fieldwork or
the start of the semester for Level I fieldwork (November). Each step may take longer than you expect so be sure to begin your process early. Waiting until two weeks or later before it is needed will certainly put you at risk for not meeting the timeline for completion.

Travel and Transportation

Students are expected to have a reliable means of transportation to and from classes and fieldwork experiences. Level I and II experiences may occur up to a one hour (+/-) drive from the college or your home in Maine. Students are responsible for all travel expenses incurred fieldwork placement. Fieldwork sites are confirmed well in advance of FW start dates and based partially on the geographic location of students. If you move, you must contact the AFWC immediately. If you have already been aligned with your site, which may be well before the communication of your site, you are at risk of alignment with a site that is beyond the desirable one hour commute. At that point, you will need to make the decision whether or not to accept the site. If you decline a site, confirmation of a different site within the established timeframes cannot be guaranteed.

Counseling Students with Difficulties during Fieldwork Experiences

Fieldwork educators and/or students should identify problems early to allow time for the student, fieldwork educator, and/or AFWC to collaboratively discuss student performance and devise goals to foster the successful completion of fieldwork.

Through telephone consultation or on-site consultation with the FWE and the student, the AFWC may assist in identifying and clarifying issues related to fieldwork placement. The AFWC may also assist with the development of a plan to resolve fieldwork issues.

Professional Behavior

All students must fully review, understand, and follow the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics, http://ajot.aota.org/article.aspx?articleid=2442685. All professional behavior expectations for USM and your FW site must be followed without exception. Failure to comply with professional behavior expectations may result in dismissal from your FW placement and/or from the MOT program.

Disability Disclosure

Under the Americans with Disability Act, occupational therapy students with disabilities have the right to decide if and when they disclose their disability to the fieldwork site. It is recommended that if you determine that you will need accommodations to fulfill the essential job functions in your fieldwork setting, you should disclose this information to the fieldwork site before you start your placement.
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

MOT students are expected to adhere to HIPAA policies while in the classroom, representing the program at community events, and at all times during the fieldwork experience. Your site may ask you to sign a form to confirm your understanding and agreement to abide by HIPAA standards/policies. **Failure to comply with HIPAA policies may result in dismissal from FW and/or from the MOT program.**

Process for Fieldwork Placements

The University of Southern Maine MOT program does not support or encourage the student to engage in conversations with fieldwork sites on your own, nor should anyone representing you contact a fieldwork site on your behalf to discuss the availability of fieldwork placements. All calls **MUST** be initiated by the AFWC for both in-state and out-of-state sites.

Level I FW sites are generally secured within the state of Maine, with the exception of established international faculty-supported fieldwork options for Level I fieldwork. The number of students that are able to participate in an international Level I fieldwork is limited. These opportunities will be shared well in advance. The USM MOT faculty will establish a process for submitting interest and selection of students. Prior to declaring your interest, it is important that your ability to participate from both a scheduling and a financial perspective has been determined.

If the student has interest in an out-of-state Level II fieldwork experience, the student will have the opportunity to express a preference. Interest in out-of-state fieldwork needs to be discussed early in the process (one year prior to the semester Level II fieldwork begins) with the AFWC. Out-of-state fieldwork will need to be explored for sites where USM has an established national Agreement in place. Please contact the AFWC to learn where USM holds these Agreements.

For out-of-state fieldwork, provide the AFWC a contact name, contact telephone number, location, and a contact email address, if possible. The AFWC will make every effort to secure a fieldwork in your desired out-of-state area. When options are exhausted and a fieldwork placement is not secured (usually by 4 months before a start date), then a Maine fieldwork site will be offered.

Each student is not alone in his/her quest for the best site. The AFWC sometimes needs to make difficult decisions. Your flexibility and respect is appreciated. There are many variables that go into the decision about a good fit for the site, student, and FWE. Your preferences are an important part of the process, but **not** a guarantee of a fieldwork placement.

Section Two – Level I Fieldwork

Level I fieldwork requires a minimum of 20 hours during EACH semester that it is assigned. Two of these experiences are required in the program. An OT/OTR supervisor is **not required** for Level I fieldwork. You may be assigned to a site with a qualified supervisor from another discipline/profession. We will honor the requests of the
site for the timing of your Level I experience and what works best for them within the semester of the scheduled fieldwork.

Level I fieldwork is not to be substituted for any part of Level II fieldwork.

The main objective of Level I fieldwork is to provide the student with opportunities to observe therapy environments and have site specific appropriate participation in hands-on activities. Each student will participate in a Level I fieldwork with a primary psychosocial focus.

The schedule has been set up based on the needs and preferences of the site. Any changes in the schedule must be made with your fieldwork educator (FWE) and with the MOT’s AFWC. It is your responsibility to participate in the communication process that occurs between the MOT program and the fieldwork site after your fieldwork site has been assigned and communicated to you.

If you are asked to take on a task(s) that you do not feel qualified for, speak with your FWE immediately. In addition, the student should discuss your concern with the Fieldwork Seminar instructor and/or the AFWC.

It is important to come to the Fieldwork Seminar prepared with questions and reflections about fieldwork. There are specific objectives and requirements for completing the USM Level I Fieldwork. Please keep in mind that your site may occasionally have additional tasks/assignments for you to complete.

Successful completion of your Level I Fieldwork requires attendance and participation at your assigned site for the required amount of time with a successful evaluation of your performance completed by your FWE, attendance and participation in the accompanying seminar with completion of all assignments and, lastly, completion of all evaluations in E*Value: the evaluation of the fieldwork site, fieldwork course, and fieldwork educator.

In addition, attendance and active participation in Level I fieldwork seminars with timely completion of assignments is required as part of your Level I fieldwork experience.

Development of professional behavior begins in the classroom. As a student, you are required to demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom as well as throughout the fieldwork experience. The student is responsible for understanding the norms of the fieldwork site, both implicit and explicit. When in doubt, ask for clarification.

Section Three – Level II Fieldwork

Level II fieldwork requires two separate 12-week affiliations under the supervision of an OT/OTR who has at least one year of experience at the time that the student begins fieldwork under their supervision (ACOTE standards).

Once all sites are secured for the number of students that require fieldwork, the MOT faculty reviews availability, geographic preference, clinical preference, student strengths/needs, and timing of fieldwork. Once this discussion occurs, fieldwork alignments are shared with students. While this an exciting time for students, the broad communication of sites cannot be shared until everyone has a placement assigned. The only exception is if the student’s placement requires a relocation out of state, or the site
requires a student’s name in advance of the group decision. If the student declines the fieldwork site that was assigned, due to the difficulty in confirming sites, the student will be placed at the bottom of the assignment list and will not be guaranteed an additional offer within the same time period. There are a limited number of available sites during each FW rotation. This may jeopardize the student’s ability to continue the MOT program within the scheduled timeframes and may delay graduation.

Because of site availability, not all requests can be honored. All students are guaranteed an appropriate FW placement for both of their level II experiences. Once the student is offered a fieldwork site, it is the student’s opportunity to engage and learn.

It is imperative that if the student has time off requirements during the scheduled fieldwork for critical family/personal needs, that these are planned for and discussed up front PRIOR to arriving at the fieldwork site. The fieldwork educator may approve or deny the request. It is highly recommended that you view your fieldwork placement the same as accepting a full-time professional role, where time off is usually not supported during the first three months.

Level II Fieldwork Begins

Asking questions is good. Do not feel it puts you at a disadvantage, as if you don’t know enough. If you are asking questions about information that your supervisor feels you should already know, he/she should tell you that.

There should be regular meetings between you and your supervisor. It is common that meetings occur informally every day for the first few weeks, and formally once per week. There should be no surprises at the midterm. Both parties should discuss any issues, including positive feedback, throughout the fieldwork.

Frequently, you will have several projects to complete as part of your fieldwork experience. These can range from article review presentations to the fabrication of a specific piece of adaptive equipment for a client. The expectation is that you invest productive time and thought into your tasks. It is not uncommon for students to spend additional time every week outside of the time invested at the site. Even catching up on paperwork comes slowly at first, and time will also be needed to research and prepare interventions for the next day of fieldwork.

In addition, you are required to actively participate with the online portion of the course as outlined in the syllabus for OTH 620 and OTH 621. This is facilitated by USM OT Faculty.

If you are out due to illness or other reason (with the exception of site holidays) during your 12 week experience, you will need to make up your time at the end if it is greater than two days. You are required to participate in the experience on a full-time basis, unless your ACFW, the site and you have made another arrangement for a specific circumstance.

Email and Blackboard Use during Fieldwork

Daily checking of your @maine.edu email and use of Blackboard for your course is required while participating in fieldwork.
Students who do not complete all Blackboard requirements as outlined in the syllabus will not receive a passing grade for fieldwork, regardless of whether or not they pass their site experience. This is still considered a required course toward your degree even though you are not on campus.

Successful completion of your Level II Fieldwork requires attendance and participation at your assigned site for the required amount of time with a mid-term evaluation and successful final evaluation of your performance completed by your Fieldwork Educator, active participation in the accompanying Blackboard Discussions (as outlined in the course syllabus), at least weekly accurate submission of fieldwork hours in E*Value and, finally, completion of the evaluation of the fieldwork site (SEFWE) and fieldwork educator(s) (WDYWW Supplemental SEFWE) in E*Value. The mid-term Student Evaluation and Final Student Evaluation must be read and signed off by the student in E*Value. A pass-fail grade will not be assigned until all aspects of the course are completed and your Blackboard requirements were met.

E*Value Policies and Procedures

All students and fieldwork educators will utilize the online software program E*Value (https://www.e-value.net) for the logging of student hours and completion of appropriate evaluations, for both level I and level II fieldwork placements. Login information and a student use manual will be provided for all fieldwork students during the associated fieldwork seminar course. No paper evaluations will be used.

Students will be required to log all hours worked during fieldwork placements on at least a weekly basis, for tracking purposes. Fieldwork educators will be asked to verify and approve entered hours.

Failure to complete all assigned evaluations in E*Value will result in an incomplete grade for the associated fieldwork course.

The E*Value Student Instruction Manual (along with other important fieldwork resources) can be found here: http://usm.maine.edu/ot/mot-fieldwork-resources
Student Acknowledgement Form for Manual Review

- I understand that the contents of the USM MOT Fieldwork Manual are in addition to the USM MOT Student Handbook and that the contents of the Student Handbook remain in place.
- I have thoroughly reviewed and understand the contents of the USM MOT Student Fieldwork Manual.
- I agree to follow the guidance outlined in the USM Student Handbook and the USM Fieldwork Manual and accept the responsibility as outlined.
- I understand that I am responsible for all costs of obtaining site requirements and will do so in a timely manner.
- I accept the responsibility to complete all site requirements as a condition of my participation in fieldwork experiences.

__________________________________
Print and Sign Full Legal Name

__________________________________
Date