

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT & PHYSIOTHERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATION ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

November 2014 Update on T-Res Project

OTA/PTA educational programs have expressed uncertainty about their ability to accurately track OTA vs PTA clinical hours, especially given that in many placements students undertake combined duties. To address this concern, a research project was undertaken to determine whether an online tracking and reporting system for fieldwork placements would be able to discriminate between OTA and PTA activities during combined clinical placements. T-Res was chosen as the electronic tracking platform for the project as it has been used successfully in physical and occupational therapy programs to track a variety of clinical placement indicators. A second goal of this research project was to inform future revisions to the accreditation standards, especially criterion 3.4.2:

Clinical fieldwork education includes no less than 30% (150 hours) of the total time in each discipline for each student.

The primary research objectives were:

1. To distinguish OTA and PTA activities in combined fieldwork placements.
2. To identify activities completed during combined OTA and PTA fieldwork placements that can legitimately be recorded as either OTA or PTA.
3. To inform revisions to the accreditation standards pertaining to fieldwork experiences.

The T-Res on-line tracking system was developed and pilot tested with one volunteer OTA/PTA education program (Mohawk College), utilizing two cohorts of students. The pilot test went well. Students reported no difficulties with the process. Student recommendations from the pilot included an explanation of the goals of the project and clearer description of direct and indirect care, and these changes were made in time for the full implementation of the project. Preceptor feedback, although limited, was also positive.

The full project is now in process. Data are being collected from all students at five volunteer programs across the country: Centennial College, Mohawk College, Nova Scotia Community College, Sault College, and Vancouver Community College.

Several possible formats for reporting the pilot data have been reviewed and three were selected as offering the most useful results. The results from the pilot data will soon be compiled using the 3 possible reporting formats and the reports should be available later this fall. These results will be reviewed carefully by the T-Res Working Group so that any adjustments to the analyses and reporting format can be made before the full project data are available for analysis and report.

We are eagerly awaiting the full results of the T-Res project. Our thanks go to the working group members as well as to all the programs and students who are participating in this important research project. Once the results are collected and analyzed in the summer of 2015, we will share the outcomes and the recommendations nationally.