

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT & PHYSIOTHERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATION ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

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**Education Session: May 23, 2013**

### ***Small Group Discussion Session – Ideas Generated***

#### 1. Strategies to increase fieldwork placements for both OTA and PTA

- Limit the number of new programs
- Utilize non-supervised settings (eg Move E.Z.)
- Sub-clinical patients (eg family, friends – clinical learning)
- Hire practitioners to complete fieldwork (eg education program hires OT to be in the setting and supervise OTA students in the setting); contract with facilities where there is no OT on staff to bring in a team consisting of licensed OT and OTA students to work with patients/residents.
- Encourage graduates to take students and encourage their supervising OT or PT to take them
- Financial incentives (in ON, preceptors who take OT students or PT students receive an honorarium – not for OTA or PTA students)
- Partnership in student PT/OT clinics
- Opportunities for projects while on placement – create a placement where a community project + patient care are combined; explore pilot projects and partnerships
- CCA OTs in Ontario are not allowed to take students – advocate to change this
- Ensure that placement dates are staggered between programs (and university OT/PT programs) in adjacent catchment areas to avoid competition for placements
- Ensure clear communication with other adjacent programs to not infringe on their placement facilities/hosts – respect each other's geographical placement boundaries
- Staggering placement days for students within the same program
- Use of clinical practice leaders and managers on the role of OTA/PTA. Perhaps new OT and PT grads would be good candidates as supervisors for OTA/PTA students as a preparation for supervision of OT and PT students
- Use of HSP net – track placements better
- Seek out more service areas (eg. mental health)
- Explore 2:1 placements
- Explore interdisciplinary placements (PT preceptor with PT student and PTA student together/ OT preceptor with OT student and OTA student together)
- Explore using faculty members as student preceptors/supervisors (this will not work in some provinces as is not allowed).
- Mandatory placements outside of hometown – ensure students upon acceptance to the program are aware that part of fieldwork will take place in regions away from program location
- Encourage facilities to put student supervision as an expectation of being an employee – how can we encourage this?
  - Caution: “forcing”/mandating OTs/PTs to take students might change the quality of placements in the future
- Explore role emerging placements such with vendors/sales, and community based
- Dedicate more time to preceptor education and support

### Specific Challenges:

- Lots of part time PTs and OTs – how can they take students?
  - Mixed placements – students are part time at two sites or with two therapists
- OT and OTA culture
  - Build OTA capacity
  - PR campaign to create “buy-in” from employers
  - Encourage CAOT to advocate for members to take students
  - Increase awareness nationally regarding the need for OTA (and PTA) placements through newsletters etc.
- Is the OT role in transition – moving more to contract/consultant model? If so, what is the role of an OTA in this new model? Does the role of OTA also need to shift?

### 2. Methods to track fieldwork hours in combined placements

- Have students track throughout their fieldwork placements
- Have preceptors for combined fieldwork placements describe the split between OTA hours and PTA hours for each student
- Include on last page of fieldwork evaluation completed by preceptor an estimate of % of time in OTA vs PTA skills
  - Caution: Would this estimate be valid in any way?
- Consider the wording of the criterion:
  - Is the goal 30% OTA, 30% PTA and 40% combined? The 40% combined is KEY.
- Have students complete “stats” every day
- Practical skills checklist based on combined, OTA and PTA placements
  - List of CORE OTA skills, CORE PTA skills, and combined skills (communication, professionalism, etc.)
- Should we track skills/competencies rather than hours?
- Measure hours in terms of who signs off for the student (if PT signs off, then hours considered PTA hours, if OT signs off, then hours considered OTA hours)

### Other thoughts:

- Should an OT or a PT be the supervisor for combined OTA/PTA placements?
- The variety of placement locations may be more important than the OTA/PTA split
- Acknowledgement that not EVERYTHING can be covered in fieldwork placements. Students need the skills to recognize their own level of competency level and to ask for help once they have graduated
- Create a National fieldwork evaluation form – standardize across the country to ensure consistency in competencies measured, and create an opportunity for consistent tracking of experiences