

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT AND PHYSIOTHERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATION ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

GUIDE-11 TRACKING FIELDWORK HOURS

PREAMBLE

Fieldwork experiences contribute to the overall learning of the student; they assist in application of theoretical knowledge and provide an opportunity to practice skills learned in classroom and during lab sessions, as well as allowing for exposure to a workplace environment with “real-life” patients. The accreditation process ensures that education programs provide their students with clinical education / fieldwork experiences in occupational therapy and physiotherapy contexts that enable students to achieve the program’s learning outcomes. For the purposes of accreditation, fieldwork education must include a minimum of 500 clinical hours, of which no less than 30% of the total hours (150 hours) are to be completed in each discipline (single discipline programs must include 350 fieldwork hours).

In order to ensure that all students complete the required hours in each discipline, this guideline has been developed to identify the level of tracking required from education programs (students, preceptors and fieldwork coordinators) when providing evidence to demonstrate compliance with the criteria related to fieldwork hours.

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE AS CORE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

The Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant Education Accreditation Program (OTA & PTA EAP) considers compliance with eight of the OTA & PTA EAP 2012 Accreditation criteria essential for accreditation and have thus made these criteria core. Education programs must demonstrate compliance with these Core Criteria in order to be awarded accreditation fully compliant or partially compliant. Non-compliance with any of these Core Criteria will result automatically in either probationary Accreditation or non-Accreditation (see policy [ACC-03B](#)).

With the revision to criterion 3.4 (July 2016), three of the Core Criteria relate to fieldwork experiences.

- 3.4 The program provides clinical education / fieldwork experiences in occupational therapy and physiotherapy that enable students to achieve the learning outcomes.
 - 3.4.1 CORE: Clinical/fieldwork education includes a minimum of 500 hours in the clinical setting.
NOTE: Single discipline programs must include 350 fieldwork hours.
 - 3.4.2 CORE: Clinical/fieldwork education includes no less than 30% (150 hrs) of the total time in each discipline.

- 3.4.3 CORE: A registered occupational therapist faculty member is available to students and preceptors on issues related to occupational therapy practice in fieldwork. Similarly, a registered physiotherapist faculty member is available to students and preceptors on issues related to physiotherapy practice in fieldwork.

In order to demonstrate compliance with these Core Criteria, it is essential that programs provide evidence in the Self Study Report which provides sufficient detail to the reader to determine compliance with criterion 3.4.

Fieldwork experiences must also follow [GUIDE-06 – Supervision of OTA/PTA Students During Fieldwork](#) and [GUIDE-12 – Role Emerging Fieldwork Placements](#).

DEFINITIONS

Fieldwork Placement Hours

Hours in which the student engages in OTA/PTA activities as assigned by an OT or PT, either directly or via a supervising OTA/PTA who is acting as the student's preceptor during the placement. These hours include lunch breaks and other assigned breaks as taken by the supervising OT, PT, or OTA/PTA as part of the regular work day. In combined placements, these breaks would be tracked as per the placement split (i.e.: for a placement that is 50% OTA and 50% PTA, the break time would be assigned as 50% OTA hours and 50% PTA hours; for a placement that is a 20/80 split, the break time would be assigned as OTA hours and PTA hours according to the 20/80 split).

OTA Fieldwork Placement Hours

Hours in which the student completed OTA tasks as assigned directly by the supervising OT, or as assigned by the supervising OT ultimately responsible for the work of the OTA/PTA who is acting as the student's preceptor during the placement.

PTA Fieldwork Placement Hours

Hours in which the student completed PTA tasks as assigned directly by the supervising PT, or as assigned by the supervising PT ultimately responsible for the work of the OTA/PTA who is acting as the student's preceptor during the placement.

TRACKING FIELDWORK HOURS

The following conditions are used by the Peer Review Team (PRT) and the Joint Accreditation Committee (JAC) of the OTA & PTA EAP as guidelines to determine compliance with accreditation criteria 3.4.1 and 3.4.2:

For each student completing the program, the following must be provided as evidence:

- Total number of fieldwork hours (minimum 500 hours or 350 hours for single discipline programs)
- Total number of fieldwork hours completed in OTA experiences (minimum 150 hours)
- Total number of fieldwork hours completed in PTA experiences (minimum 150 hours)

In order to demonstrate compliance with the criteria, the program must provide evidence that all students completing the program have met the minimum requirements as described above.

Programs must provide evidence in the Self Study Report of the following when describing compliance with criteria 3.4.1 and 3.4.2, with respect to fieldwork hours completed by each student:

- Number of hours completing OTA tasks as assigned directly by the supervising OT or as assigned by the OT ultimately responsible for the work of the OTA/PTA who is acting as the student's preceptor during the placement
- Number of hours completing PTA tasks as assigned directly by the supervising PT, or as assigned by the PT ultimately responsible for the work of the OTA/PTA who is acting as the student's preceptor during the placement
- Evidence of daily tracking of OTA hours and PTA hours (as defined above), including regular (daily/weekly) approval/sign-off by the preceptor
- Evidence of a process for regular submission of the completed and signed tracking sheet(s) to the program fieldwork coordinator
- Evidence of strategies used by the program's fieldwork coordinator throughout the placement to ensure the balance of OTA and PTA hours (especially during combined OTA/PTA fieldwork experiences) provided for the student is as expected, allowing opportunities to adjust should a student be falling short of the required hours for one discipline
- Evidence of the number and type (i.e.: OTA hours or PTA hours) of make-up hours (as applicable)

MANAGING UNEXPECTED CHANGES WITHIN PLACEMENTS

It is understood that the experiences expected for a student during a fieldwork placement may change unpredictably, thereby affecting the balance of OTA and PTA hours to which the student is exposed. Examples include student or preceptor illness or absence, absence of the OT or PT who is responsible for the supervision of the OTA/PTA preceptor or a change in the patient conditions available to the students in the clinical site.

It is expected programs will have in place robust contingency plans and policies to manage unplanned changes in either OT /PT assignments or hour requirements. These should provide a student the opportunity to complete the program with the required hours in each discipline to ensure they meet the requisite competencies and to allow the program to demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria.

Activities to make up lost placement hours due to unforeseen circumstances must meet the expectations described below. The activity will:

1. be relevant to the discipline that requires the makeup placement hours,
2. be planned and supervised by the fieldwork educator in collaboration with the student and where possible, the onsite fieldwork coordinator,

3. be evaluated by the fieldwork educator,
4. enable the student to link the activity to the discipline-specific clinical competencies,
5. address the student's learning objectives in relation to their professional development within the context of the fieldwork environment, and
6. allow for a consolidation of the student's learning through application to the fieldwork setting or client population.

Some examples of activities that could be considered to make up fieldwork hours lost as a result of unforeseen circumstances are:

- Case Studies: Student completes a case study related to the onsite fieldwork setting/patient population and provides activities to support the OT or PT goal. For example, activities to improve hand dexterity following stroke, researching local community resources that are based on a case study related specifically to the placement experience.
- Project Work: Student completes a project that demonstrates consolidation of skills learned while on placement. For example, adaptive sewing tasks; equipment modifications; creation of busy boxes for dementia clients; updating 'take home' treatment activities sheets, lists of device vendors, or contact sheets for community support groups; gathering online resources such as video tutorials on lifts and transfers.
- In-services: Student creates an educational session for staff on topics such as a new piece of equipment, a new client related service in the community, research on a clinically relevant topic.
- Equipment Maintenance: Student helps organize and clean exercise and ADL equipment used for teaching at the college.

TIMELINES FOR DEMONSTRATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERION 3.4 (REVISED)

Programs with Accreditation Status:

Programs with accreditation status as of April 30, 2019 are required to submit evidence of compliance with the revised Criterion 3.4 in a Progress Report on or before August 1, 2019. Alternatively, programs may choose to submit evidence of compliance as part of an earlier scheduled Progress Report or Self Study Report at any time prior to the August 1, 2019 deadline. The JAC and PEAC/CAOT Boards will then review the program submissions for evidence of compliance by January 1, 2020 ([ACC-03B Accreditation Decisions](#)).

Programs with Candidacy Status:

Programs with candidacy status should begin to track fieldwork hours as evidence of compliance with the new Criterion 3.4 and will submit this evidence as part of their first Self Study Report.

Policy Number: GUIDE-11	
Date of last revision	Associated documents
Jul 2016 April 2017	GUIDE-06 – Supervision of OTA/PTA Students During Fieldwork
	GUIDE-12 Role Emerging Clinical Placements
	ACC-03B Accreditation Decisions