

# DEVELOPING AN OTA STUDENT FIELDWORK MANUAL

Fieldwork students must acclimate to a new environment, people, tasks, routines, schedules, and expectations at the start of a fieldwork experience. It is most helpful to present students with a fieldwork manual on the very first day to guide them through the initial unfamiliarity and discomfort often associated with the beginning of fieldwork. Many common questions can be easily addressed through a printed manual, thereby alleviating initial disorientation a student may experience during the first week. Simply knowing what to expect around the corner, or at the start of the next week can eliminate much anxiety and apprehension, thereby enabling a more pleasant occasion for both student and fieldwork educator.

Developing a manual can also help you to better understand all that the student must learn within the brief fieldwork experience. It can help you to become more sensitive to the needs, questions, and concerns that students often have. It can help you to establish or adjust expectations to be reasonable, yet challenging.

Material for the manual can be gathered from many sources within your facility (e.g., *employee handbooks, Human Resources Department, etc.*). You don't necessarily have to "*reinvent the wheel*". Many of the items that could be included already exist within your organization.

Recommended Content:

## 1. ORIENTATION OUTLINE

- A schedule and description of what the student will be seeing and doing during the first day or several days of orientation. The first day is always the most overwhelming. Knowing, at first, what is expected hour-by-hour is always appreciated by students.

## 2. WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE OF RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Describe what is expected of the student each week including roles and responsibilities, and assignment due dates.
- Specify whether student should be observing, assisting, participating, initiating, etc.
- Consider using other performance scales to indicate level of expected competence. For example:  
25% of the time, 50% of the time 75% of the time, 100% of the time.

### **3. STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

AOTA requires that each fieldwork site develop learning objectives reflective of the unique demands, pace, patient/consumer population, philosophy, and methodology of the organization.

- Objectives should describe the actions, duties, and skills the student should display by the completion of fieldwork.
- Just like patient/consumer treatment goals and objectives, they should be behavioral, measurable, and realistic.
- Indicate a timeline (*week-by-week schedule*) by which objectives should be met.
- Employee job descriptions may be helpful resources when determining objectives.

### **4. ASSIGNMENTS**

- Detailed descriptions of projects, papers, case studies, in-services, etc. that you require the student to complete.
- Due dates and criteria used to assess the assignments should also be included.
- Assignments should be designed to help students to acquire the essential skills and behaviors outlined in the behavioral objectives.

### **5. DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES**

- Samples of all forms
- Acceptable medical abbreviations
- Completed samples of all forms of documentation including goals/objectives, treatment plans, discharge summaries, progress notes, incident reports, etc.
- Billing procedures and forms.
- Dictation directions, if applicable.

### **6. TERMINOLOGY/VOCABULARY LIST**

- AOTA Practice Framework Terminology
- Commonly used medical and technical terms
- Agency codes and symbols
- Site-specific jargon

### **7. SAFETY PROCEDURES/EMERGENCY CODES**

- Describe responsibilities of students and staff in cases of emergencies.
- Emergencies may include fire, behavioral disturbances, medical emergencies, etc.
- Explain any codes used to identify the various types of emergencies.
- Describe any other common precautions students should take in the course of daily duties.

### **8. PATIENT/CONSUMER RIGHTS**

- Patient confidentiality, right to privacy.
- Include documents given to consumers describing their rights, due process, etc.

## **Additional Helpful Information:**

**1. Organizational chart/map of the setting.**

**2. Organization History.**

**3. Philosophy of the organization:**

- Mission
- Value statements
- Guiding principles

**4. Department information:**

- Policy and procedures
- Organizational chart
- Essential job functions
- Dress code

**5. Regularly scheduled meetings:**

- Dates\times
- Purpose of meeting

**6. Special client-related groups\programs:**

- Purpose
- Referral system
- Operation
- Transport

**7. Facility absentee policy for students.**

**8. Guidelines for students supervising aids and volunteers.**

**9. Responsibilities of:**

- Fieldwork Educator
- Students
- Facility Fieldwork Coordinator