

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FIELDWORK MANUAL



450 – 30th Street
Oakland, CA 94609

Academic Fieldwork Coordinators

Level I Fieldwork
Liz Kleine, MOT, OTR/L
510-879-9200 x 7519
lkleine@samuelmerritt.edu

Level II Fieldwork
Domenique Embrey, OTD, MS, OTR/L
510-879-9200 x 7520
dembrey@samuelmerritt.edu

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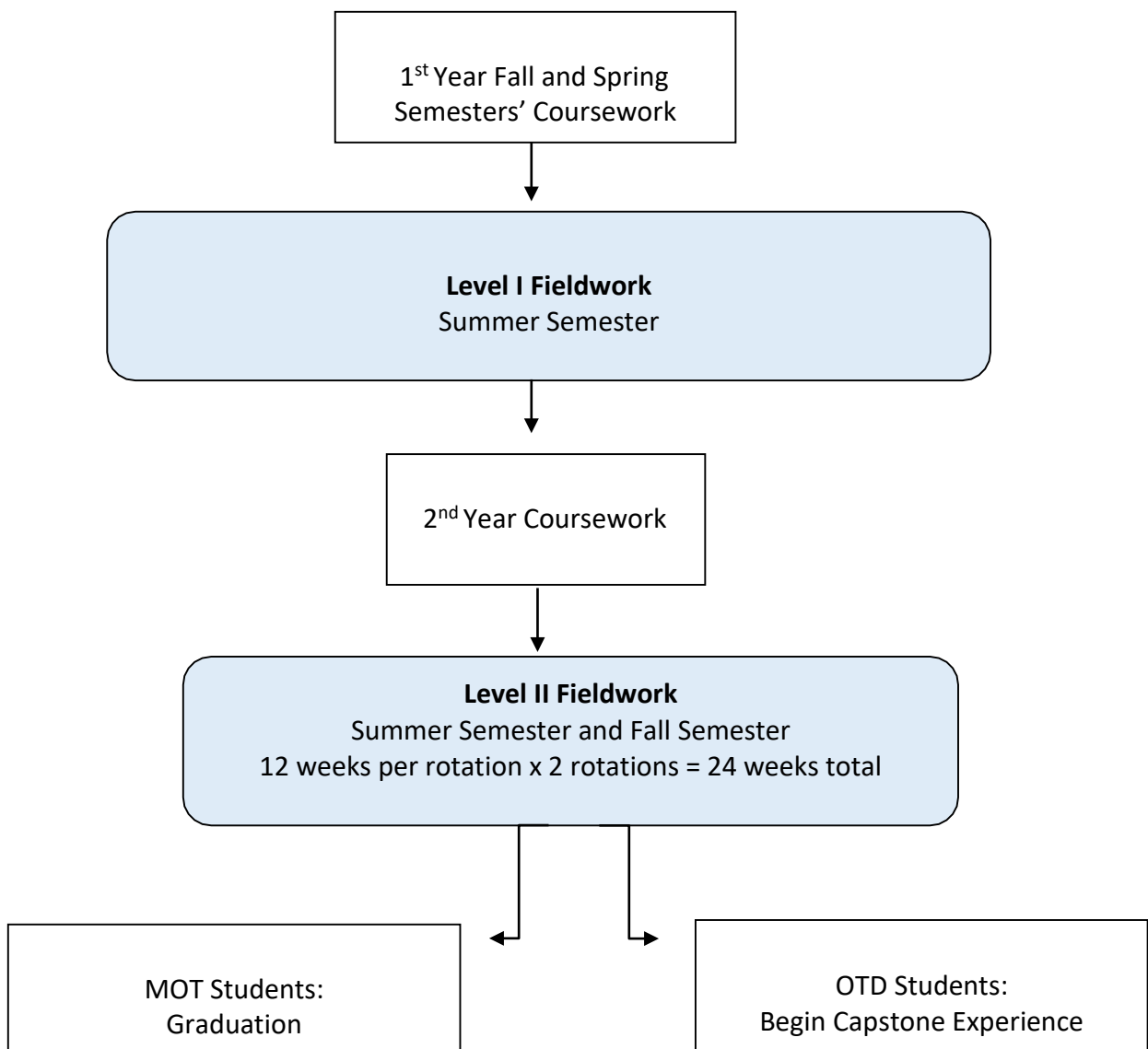
1. Introduction to Fieldwork

1.1 Purpose of Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an integral part of the training to become an occupational therapist. Fieldwork provides an opportunity to apply and integrate academic learning. During fieldwork, students carry out professional responsibilities under the supervision of qualified role models in order to make the transition from student to practitioner.

1.2 Overview of Fieldwork Courses at Samuel Merritt University

Fieldwork courses are designed in accordance with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards. **Level I Fieldwork** is completed during the summer between the first and second years of didactic coursework. **Level II Fieldwork** is completed after the second year of didactic classes.



Level I Fieldwork. OT 621L/721L - Introduction to Fieldwork (3 units)

Level I Fieldwork provides an introduction to clinical application of didactic learning. The primary purpose is to allow hands-on experiences to translate theory into practice. Through observation and participation in selected aspects of the occupational therapy process, students are introduced to clinical settings and client populations with whom an occupational therapist might work. Students develop their observational skills, professional behaviors and reasoning skills as future occupational therapists. Students must successfully complete all first-year didactic courses prior to beginning Level I Fieldwork. Successful completion of Level I Fieldwork is a prerequisite for initiating the second year of academic coursework.

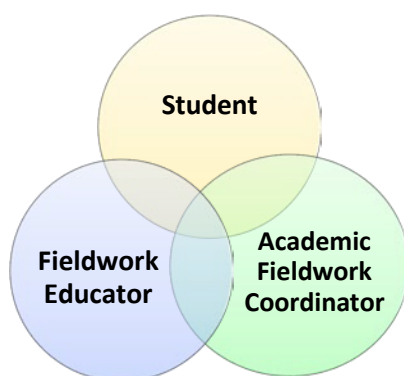
Level II Fieldwork. OT 640L/740L & OT 641L/741L (6 units per course; total 12 units)

Level II Fieldwork is designed to transition a student to the full responsibilities of an entry-level occupational therapist. Working under the supervision of licensed occupational therapists, students are expected to function as an entry-level occupational therapist by the end of each Level II Fieldwork rotation. Each rotation is 12 weeks. Students are eligible to register for Level II Fieldwork after successfully completing two years of didactic coursework. Students must successfully complete OT 640L/740L (the first rotation) before they are eligible to register for OT 641L/741L (the second rotation).

ACOTE states that fieldwork should expose students to a wide variety of clients and practice settings in order to develop competent, generalist occupational therapists. Completing Level II Fieldwork in at least two different types of practice settings broadens a student's range of clinical experiences. The faculty highly recommends that students complete one assignment in physical disabilities and another in psychosocial disabilities. If students are assigned to two physical disabilities sites, the two sites must be quite different in terms of practice settings (such as acute versus long term care). Pediatrics or hand therapy placements are usually reserved for the second Level II rotation, after completion of an adult physical disabilities assignment.

1.3 Fieldwork Participants

There are three primary participants in occupational therapy fieldwork:



Student

The student must be in good academic standing and enrolled in fieldwork courses. During fieldwork, the student is responsible for self-directed learning with guidance from the Fieldwork

Educator and support from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. The student assumes an active role in collaborating with the Fieldwork Educator and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to maximize the benefits of this interactive component of OT education.

Fieldwork Educator (FE)

The Fieldwork Educator is the clinician who directly supervises a student during fieldwork.

Level I Fieldwork Educator

In Level I Fieldwork, the FE is often an occupational therapist, although this is not an ACOTE requirement. Students could be supervised by an individual from another profession such as a recreation therapist, social worker, nurse, or teacher. There is no minimum experience requirement for the Level I Fieldwork Educator. The role of the educator is to provide guided learning to increase students' awareness of the clinical setting, client population and therapeutic interventions. No clinical placements with a fieldwork educator are scheduled in 2021

Level II Fieldwork Educator

For Level II Fieldwork, the supervising FE must be an occupational therapist who has been practicing for a minimum of one year. The FE provides an environment in which students can bridge the gap between academic education and clinical application. Educators work with students to gradually increase their responsibilities until they are able to handle the typical caseload of an entry-level therapist at the fieldwork site. While most fieldwork placements will be one fieldwork educator to one student, there are appropriate times when a student may have more than one fieldwork educator or a single fieldwork educator may have more than one student. The ratio of fieldwork educators to students will always ensure that the following criteria are met: a) proper supervision, b) protection of consumers, c) opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice, and d) the educator's ability to provide frequent assessment of student progress in achieving stated fieldwork objectives.

Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC)

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator is the Samuel Merritt University faculty responsible for securing fieldwork sites, maintaining files on students and fieldwork sites, assigning fieldwork placements to students, and collaborating with Fieldwork Educators and students to provide appropriate student placements. Once students are placed at fieldwork sites, the AFWC serves as the academic advisor. The AFWC assigns each student's academic grade for the fieldwork courses based on input from the FE. The AFWC is responsible for ensuring that the university's fieldwork program is in compliance with ACOTE fieldwork education requirements and for maintaining a collaborative relationship between the academic and clinical settings.

2. For Fieldwork Educators – About Samuel Merritt University

2.1 History and Philosophy of the Occupational Therapy Program

Samuel Merritt University was founded in 1909 as a school of nursing. The Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program was established in 1994, and the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program was implemented in 2016. Other professional programs offered by the university include nursing, physical therapy, physician assistant, and podiatry.

Samuel Merritt University's occupational therapy program incorporates the Mind-body Model, which views the mind and body as one entity. The Mind-body Model derives its scientific support from research in neuroscience, health psychology, and psychoneuroimmunology. These evolving disciplines hold the key to understanding the therapeutic value of occupation and provide the scientific rigor to study the whole person while engaged in meaningful activities of everyday life.

2.2 Overview of the Occupational Therapy Curriculum

The OT curriculum reflects current trends in education, occupational therapy practice and the health care system. Problem solving skills are cultivated as a foundation for clinical reasoning. The curriculum is competency-based and designed for the adult learner. The course work provides an opportunity for self-directed, collaborative learning and the integration of life experiences. The Mind-body Model is infused throughout the curriculum. Other major themes in our curriculum design include: evidence-based practice, scholarship, and professionalism.

The first year's course work provides a firm foundation in occupational therapy theory, basic health sciences, observation skills and interpersonal skills. Students complete Level I Fieldwork following the first two semesters of didactic courses. The second year of didactic class work focuses on practical skills for working with a broad range of client populations. Under the supervision of occupational therapy faculty, second year students gain clinical experiences with real clients in three contexts: an on-site pediatric lab, on-site adult lab, and off-site mental health settings. Students complete six months of Level II Fieldwork after the second year of didactic courses. Following Level II Fieldwork, MOT students are eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam whereas OTD students complete an additional semester of capstone coursework.

Further details and information about the MOT and OTD curricula are summarized at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/programs/doctor-and-master-occupational-therapy>.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Fieldwork Educators

Fieldwork Educators' responsibilities are provided below.

Level I Fieldwork (no clinical experiences with a fieldwork educator are scheduled for 2021)

1. Provide orientation to the clinical setting, including policies, procedures, and

scheduling.

2. Provide structured clinical supervision, including a consistent schedule which the student is expected to follow.
3. Provide the student with ongoing verbal feedback and a final written evaluation regarding progress, skill development, or suggestions for areas of improvement.
4. Provide the student with some **hands-on experience** with clients to learn and practice therapeutic techniques in addition to observation-based learning.
5. Realize that per the California Board of Occupational Therapy, it is acceptable for students to assist with providing services to clients who are receiving therapy that is considered Advanced Practice (such as hand rehabilitation, use of physical agent modalities, and/or dysphagia) as long as students are working under the supervised guidance of the occupational therapist.
6. Provide **students with at least one written assignment** which may include a progress note, SOAP note, a written report regarding a diagnosis, a case study, or another assignment per the Fieldwork Educator's discretion.
7. Complete the written student evaluation, discuss it with the student, and send a copy to lkleine@samuelmerritt.edu or to Samuel Merritt University, OT Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Level I, 450 30th Street, 4th Floor, Oakland, CA 94609.
8. Contact the OT Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Level I as soon as possible if problems arise.
9. Create an environment in which the student may ask questions to enhance observation skills and integrate classroom learning.
10. Understand that the student has completed two semesters of didactic education to this point. Therefore, the student may need demonstrations or explanations since not all pertinent content will have been covered yet in the student's academic coursework.
11. Ensure that Level I Fieldwork students are supervised by qualified personnel, which may include but are not limited to occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, psychologists, teachers, social workers, nurses, and physical therapists.

Level II Fieldwork

1. Ensure that the fieldwork experience is designed to promote clinical reasoning and reflective practice, transmit the values and beliefs that enable ethical practice, and develop professionalism and competence.
2. Provide a level II fieldwork in traditional and/or emerging practice settings consistent with the curriculum design as discussed with the academic fieldwork coordinator. Incorporate the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework in clinical practice.
3. Assure that psychosocial factors influencing engagement in occupation are understood and integrated for the development of client-centered, meaningful, occupation-based outcomes in all settings.
4. Review and contribute to fieldwork learning objectives prior to the start of the fieldwork experience.
5. Provide orientation to the clinical setting, including policies, procedures, and scheduling.

6. Ensure that the level of supervision provides protection of consumers and opportunities for appropriate role modeling of occupational therapy practice. *Initially, supervision should be direct*, and then decrease to less direct supervision as is appropriate for the setting, the severity of the client's condition, and the ability of the student.
7. Create and maintain an environment in which the students may ask and be asked questions to facilitate the integration of their classroom learning into clinical application and **gradually** assume the role of an entry-level therapist at the assigned fieldwork site.
8. Understand that although students have completed two years of didactic coursework, they may need additional explanations and demonstrations in order to implement specific evaluation and intervention techniques with clients. Provide individualized instruction according to each student's unique learning needs.
9. Provide structured clinical supervision, including a consistent schedule and a mechanism to evaluate ongoing supervision between the Fieldwork Educator and the student.
 - a. Provide written weekly learning objectives to the student. A sample schedule of weekly learning objectives is provided in the Appendix of this manual.
 - b. Meet weekly with the student to review progress toward learning objectives and to identify specific areas needing improvement.
 - c. Complete a written online midterm evaluation and final evaluation using the American Occupational Therapy Association's *Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student*. Instructions for completing the online evaluations will be provided once fieldwork is in progress. Discuss the midterm and final evaluations with the student.
10. Contact the academic fieldwork coordinator **as soon as possible** if there is a concern that a student may not pass fieldwork. If corrective action is needed, provide the student and the academic fieldwork coordinator with a remediation plan followed up by ongoing verbal and written feedback as well as ongoing assessment of progress.
11. Assist the student with determining a topic for in-service or project requirements during level II Fieldwork.
12. Attend and participate in the California Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Council's fieldwork conferences to receive professional development and resources for enhancing supervision of students.
13. **For emerging practice settings with pre approval from Samuel Merritt University** - ensure that supervision provided in a setting where no occupational therapy services exist includes a documented plan for provision of occupational therapy services and supervision by a currently licensed occupational therapist with at least 3 years of professional experience. Direct supervision must be a minimum of 8 hours per week. An occupational therapy supervisor must be available, via a variety of contact methods, to the student during all working hours. An on-site supervisor designee of another profession must be assigned while the occupational therapy supervisor is off-site.

2.4 Learning Objectives for Fieldwork Courses

It is important that Fieldwork Educators are aware of the learning objectives of our program. To ensure we are meeting ACOTE standards, the learning objectives for fieldwork courses are provided below so that Fieldwork Educators are aware of them for implementation during

fieldwork education. For Level II Fieldwork, educators will have the opportunity to review and contribute to the fieldwork objectives prior to each placement.

Level I Fieldwork Learning Objectives (OT 621L/721L)

Upon the completion of this course, the student will:

1. Identify the various roles and functions of an occupational therapist in various practice settings
2. Explain and compare the roles and collaborative relationships between the occupational therapist and the occupational therapy assistant; understand the supervisory and professional roles of each.
3. Demonstrate professional behaviors including using sound judgment in seeking assistance and responding to feedback; Conduct oneself ethically and professionally in all interactions; Dress appropriately; and demonstrate reliable work habits and communication
4. Demonstrate the ability to establish meaningful, comfortable, therapeutic relationships with clients. Understand the difference between friendship and therapeutic relationships, and the ethical responsibilities in a therapeutic relationship.
5. Demonstrate the ability to use the Mindbody approach when observing, evaluating and treating clients in a variety of settings through observation of the cognitive, biophysical, affective, psychosocial, and spiritual domains in which each individual functions.
6. Explore and identify appropriate assessments and intervention processes based on a client's occupational profile.
7. Formulate general therapeutic goals for a client. Understand how issues such as client values, life experiences, cultural considerations, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and present life roles influence the formulation of therapeutic goals and intervention activities.
8. Integrate the OTPF, critical thinking and clinical reasoning, relevant theories, frames of reference, and best evidence in order to develop a therapeutic occupational therapy plan, for the clinical case/scenario, which balances areas of occupation with the achievement of health, wellness, and occupational performance for an individual.
9. Demonstrate writing skills necessary for clinical documentation through clear, concise and professionally written assignments.
10. Analyze personal feelings associated with and biasing any interactions with standardized patient, client, staff, or institution.
11. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fieldwork policies and procedures as delineated in the Fieldwork Manual and course syllabus.

Level II Fieldwork Learning Objectives (OT 640L/740L and OT 641L/741L)

Upon the completion of this course, the student will:

1. Demonstrate clinical reasoning and reflection to ensure ethical practice.
2. Use sound judgment to ensure safety of self and others; adhere to safety and client confidentiality regulations throughout the occupational therapy process.

3. Apply the mind-body approach by considering and addressing each individual's biophysical, cognitive, affective, social and spiritual domains for all client populations and settings.
4. Analyze, synthesize, and apply models of occupational performance throughout the therapeutic process. Be able to explain to clients or staff how specific occupations address client goals; be able to explain the meaning and dynamics of occupation and activity including the interrelatedness of occupations, performance skills, performance patterns, activity demands, contexts, and client factors.
5. Understand and explain the various roles and functions an occupational therapist may have as a practitioner, including case coordinator and case manager; educator; researcher; consultant and entrepreneur in traditional and emerging practice settings.
6. Explain the importance of the therapeutic relationship in attaining client goals; demonstrate the ability to establish meaningful, comfortable, therapeutic relationships with clients; and explain the ethical responsibilities in this relationship.
7. Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate evaluation techniques in order to formulate an intervention plan including general and specific goals and objectives. Select, administer, and interpret a variety of standardized and non-standardized screening or assessment tools as appropriate to the client's needs.
8. Apply clinical reasoning and flexibility in implementing evidence-based intervention plans related to client values, life experiences, present life roles, and changes that may occur during the intervention process. Demonstrate the ability to select and deliver occupations and activities, preparatory methods and tasks, education and training, and advocacy.
9. Be able to monitor the effect of occupational therapy intervention and reassess the need for continued or modified intervention. Be prepared to plan for discharge in collaboration with the client, significant others, and the healthcare team.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the respective roles of the occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant within the fieldwork setting regardless of whether an OTA is in the setting. Identify and demonstrate skills of supervision and collaboration with occupational therapy assistants.
11. Demonstrate effective written, oral and nonverbal communication skills for collaboration with client, family, colleagues and other healthcare providers.
12. Produce effective clinical documentation to ensure justification and reimbursement for occupational therapy services.
13. Demonstrate good judgment and professionalism in seeking assistance, responding to feedback, and resolving conflicts in all interpersonal interactions.
14. Demonstrate respect and consideration for factors of culture, diversity, disability status and other individual and contextual variables of a setting.
15. Demonstrate reliable work habits, ongoing communication of schedule with supervisor, effective time management, and other important professional behaviors.

2.5 Student Privacy Rights

According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students have explicit privacy rights with respect to their education records. Samuel Merritt University is **not authorized to disclose information** to Fieldwork Educators regarding students' disability status or performance in academic coursework, including previous fieldwork assignments.

2.6 Procedures for Student Injuries During Fieldwork

Samuel Merritt University Clinical Student Injury Procedures must be followed if a fieldwork student is injured on the job. Please follow the process delineated in the Appendix of this manual or online at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/faculty-and-staff/human-resources> (scroll down and expand the "Occupational Injuries & Clinical Student Injuries" tab).

2.7 Resources for Fieldwork Education

Within this manual, fieldwork educators may find it particularly useful to review the following:

- Chapter 1. Introduction to Fieldwork
- Chapter 6. Professional Behaviors During Fieldwork
- Chapter 7. Contingency Planning for Planning for Level II Fieldwork
- Chapter 8. Learning Contracts
- Appendices.

In addition, SMU has a dedicated fieldwork educators' webpage, which provides resources to support the critical role of Fieldwork Educator for the occupational therapy profession. Resources include the Fieldwork Educators Certificate Workshop, the AOTA website, the California Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Council's annual fieldwork conference, as well as assessment forms and communication tools to be used with students. Please visit <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/occupational-therapy-fieldwork-education>.

3. Fieldwork Scheduling Process

3.1 Criteria for Assigning Students to Fieldwork Sites

The AFWC 's primary consideration is meeting the ACOTE mandate that each student has a broad exposure to OT practice areas and is well-prepared as a generalist entry level occupational therapist.

Additionally, other criteria which can be considered include:

- availability of sites and qualified fieldwork educators
- student preference to be within a 90-minute commute
- student request regarding type of setting or client population
- discussion with faculty about student's learning needs
- input from students about their learning style.

For each student, the AFWC considers factors such as whether the student would benefit from a:

- slow versus fast paced environment
- large versus smaller facility
- structured versus a less structured student program
- predictable versus a more dynamic clinical setting
- traditional versus emerging practice area.

Flexibility from both the student and the AFWC is a necessary component of this placement process. Efforts to meet individual student's needs are made as much as possible; however, it may not be possible to accommodate all aspects of a student's request. In some instances, there are more student requests for a particular geographic location or a practice setting than available sites. In addition, circumstances beyond Samuel Merritt University's control (e.g., staffing changes at fieldwork sites) affect the availability of sites. Adaptability and a willingness to learn in any environment will provide students with the best experience.

3.2 Contacting Sites to Request Fieldwork Placements

It is the sole responsibility of the AFWC to communicate with sites to request, schedule, and confirm fieldwork placements. If a student has contact information for a potential site, they should forward the information to the AFWC, who will follow up. Students are not allowed to contact sites directly to request fieldwork placements. Doing so may potentially jeopardize sites' receptiveness to accepting Samuel Merritt University students.

3.3 Contracts Between Fieldwork Sites and Samuel Merritt University

All fieldwork sites must have a current, signed contract with Samuel Merritt University before a student can be placed at a site. A current contract is required for students' liability and malpractice coverage to be in effect during fieldwork. Each contract must be reviewed and signed by the university's administrators and by the fieldwork site's designated representatives. In general, this process can take six months to a year for completion. Unexpected circumstances

may further delay or prevent the contract completion process. The Department of Occupational Therapy cannot guarantee that a contract being pursued to meet a specific student's request will be completed.

3.4 Level I Fieldwork

Students submit their geographic preferences for Level I clinical placements in October of the first year of the OT program and have an opportunity to update their preferences in January. Typically, in April, the Level I AFWC distributes site assignments to students based on their geographic preferences. After receiving the site assignment, the student contacts the fieldwork site to schedule the specific dates for fieldwork. Only fieldwork arranged between the site and the AFWC will fulfill the academic requirement for fieldwork.

3.5 Level II Fieldwork

Table 1. Level II Fieldwork Site Assignment: Process and Timelines

When	What
First Year of OT Program	
First Semester	Students provide preliminary geographic preferences to the AFWC
April 15	Last day for students to update out-of-state requests
August 15	Last day for students to update requests within California
Second Year of OT Program	
November – March	AFWC works with fieldwork sites to secure needed placements. Some students will be assigned placements during this time to meet site requirements for earlier confirmations.
April 1	AFWC notifies students of site assignments as placements are confirmed via Exxat
April – June	AFWC continues to assure placements are completed and confirmed.

The planning process for Level II Fieldwork begins during the first semester of the OT program. Students provide preliminary information to the AFWC about geographic preferences and types of experiences desired. Throughout the first year of the OT program, students can modify their fieldwork requests up to **April 15** for out-of-state requests and **August 15** for requests in California.

A few students may be notified of their placements during the fall semester of the second academic year if specific sites require confirmations at that time. Generally, students are assigned fieldwork sites by April 1 preceding the summer Level II fieldwork. In some instances, delays may occur when sites cannot confirm placements by April 1; the AFWC will notify students as soon as sites confirm.

Once a placement is confirmed, students cannot request changes. If extenuating circumstances arise that preclude a student from completing the assigned fieldwork, the student must contact the AFWC immediately. If the AFWC needs to find a different placement for a student per the student's request, the start of fieldwork could be delayed by 3 months or more due to the additional time required to secure another site.

3.6 Out-of-State Fieldwork Assignments

Students who wish to return to their home state will be considered for out of-state assignments. If Samuel Merritt University already has a contract with a fieldwork site that is in a region requested by a student, that site will be used. If a student has contacts for fieldwork sites, this information should be provided to the AFWC. However, all direct communications with potential sites to request fieldwork placements must be completed by the AFWC; **students are not allowed to contact sites to request fieldwork**. There are some states where we are unable to place students due to restriction with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

In some instances, the AFWC may determine that it is in the student's best interest to remain in California, so that the AFWC can offer more immediate support to the student. It is important for students to have flexibility with locations, such as a broader geographic region or to remain in California for fieldwork.

3.7 Fieldwork Supervision Where No OT Services Exist

When a student is assigned to a level II fieldwork placement in a setting where no occupational therapy services exist, a plan for supervision will be made. Supervision will be by a currently licensed or otherwise regulated occupational therapist with at least 3 years' full-time or its equivalent of professional experience prior to the Level II fieldwork. Supervision will include a minimum of 8 hours of direct supervision each week of the fieldwork experience. An occupational therapy supervisor will be available, via a variety of contact methods, to the student during all working hours. An on-site supervisor designee of another profession will be assigned while the occupational therapy supervisor is off site.

3.8 International Fieldwork Policy

Samuel Merritt University does not provide occupational therapy fieldwork assignments outside the United States. The focus of our program is to prepare students for passing the NBCOT examination and for practicing in the U.S. Providing fieldwork within the U.S. is the most effective way to provide students the relevant knowledge and skills necessary for practice within the U.S.

3.9 Level II Fieldwork Duration and Dates

Each student is required to complete a minimum of 24 weeks' full-time Level II fieldwork. In special circumstances this may be completed on a part-time basis, as defined by the fieldwork placement and in accordance with the fieldwork placement's usual and customary personnel policies, as long as it is at least 50% of a full-time equivalent at that site. The student can complete Level II fieldwork in a minimum of one setting if it is reflective of more than one practice area, or in a maximum of four different settings.

The table below provides the dates for Level II fieldwork. There may be some variance in fieldwork dates due to individual student circumstances or sites' needs.

Table 2. Level II Fieldwork Dates

	2021	2022	2023
First Rotation Summer Semester	5/17 to 8/6	5/16 to 8/5	5/15 to 8/4
Second Rotation Fall Semester	9/13 to 12/3	9/12 to 12/2	9/11 to 12/1

4. Requirements for Fieldwork

4.1 Overview of Common Requirements for Fieldwork

The following table is an overview of requirements that are commonly requested by fieldwork sites. Information about how to meet these requirements is provided in this chapter, on Exxat, and online at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/occupational-therapy-fieldwork-education>. Site-specific requirements vary and change. **It is each student's personal responsibility to verify the current requirements for each assigned site within 2 weeks of receiving a fieldwork assignment and to upload that information to EXXAT.**

Table 3. Common Requirements for Fieldwork

Requirement	Notes	Documentation
Physical examination	To be completed within 12 months of starting fieldwork. Some sites require the physical to be even more recent.	Student enters the information on Exxat under the “Required Documents” page, “Additional Health Information Tab.” Additionally, be prepared to provide a copy of original health records if requested at each site.
Updated immunization	Refer to section 4.4 for more information	
Flu shot	Needed if placement is at a medically-based site during flu season. Must wear a mask if flu shot is declined.	
TB test	Usually needs to be completed within 6 months of each fieldwork assignment. Some sites require two-step TB testing, which is provided by SMU’s Student Health Services.	
COVID vaccine or recent COVID negative test	Some sites are requiring a negative COVID test within 4 days of starting. Others are requesting proof of COVID vaccine.	
CPR for Healthcare Providers	Must remain current for the entire duration of fieldwork.	Student uploads certificates to Exxat and takes copies to each site
Bloodborne pathogens certification	Refer to section 4.6	
HIPAA training	Refer to section 4.7	
These additional requirements may be required. They are provided by the student directly to their site		
Background checks	Refer to section 4.8	Obtain specific instructions from the fieldwork site. Student provides
Fingerprinting	Refer to section 4.9	
Drug testing	Refer to section 4.10	
N95 mask	Refer to section 4.11	

		proof directly to each site.
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4.2 Student Responsibility for Obtaining Required Documentation

It is the students' personal responsibility to ensure that all requirements are fulfilled prior to starting fieldwork. Physical examination, immunizations, and TB testing are provided at Samuel Merritt University's Student Health Services. Documentation of student background checks completed upon admittance to the OT program can be accessed from SMU's Enrollment and Student Services Office. Fees incurred to meet fieldwork requirements are the student's responsibility.

4.3 Student Information Release to Fieldwork Sites via EXXAT

For planning purposes, the AFWC needs to release student information to fieldwork sites. Students are responsible for uploading relevant documentation on their EXXAT account. In addition, students must expressly authorize this release of information on the "Review & Sign" page of the student profile on EXXAT.

4.4 Immunization Requirements

Fieldwork sites commonly require students to provide documentation (either immunization records or positive titers) for the following:

- Measles (Rubella), Mumps and Rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Tdap.

Please refer to the "Student Health Requirements and Policies" section of the Samuel Merritt University Catalog/Student Handbook or contact Student Health Services for more information.

4.5 Influenza (flu) Vaccine

Hospitals commonly require their workers to either have evidence of a flu shot or to wear a mask when working with their patients during flu season. Samuel Merritt University requires students to have a flu shot before starting any clinical experience. Please plan to obtain a flu shot or expect to wear a mask during patient contact.

4.6 COVID Guidelines

COVID guidelines are continuously changing. The student is responsible for asking each fieldwork site about specific guidelines for COVID; the COVID vaccine and COVID testing are commonly required. In addition, students should follow the guidelines provided in the SMU COVID-19 Student Compendium found at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/coronavirus>.

4.7 Bloodborne Pathogens Certification

Students are required to complete an online self-study course in order to obtain the bloodborne pathogens certification. Students will choose and complete an online course prior to beginning

Level I fieldwork and again prior to Level II fieldwork. At the conclusion of the course, students will be required to pass an exam in order to receive a certificate of completion. Students should save a copy of the certificate for their own records and also upload a copy to EXXAT.

4.8 HIPAA Training

HIPAA regulations require that all clinicians must comply with confidentiality standards. The Level I AFWC will provide students with specific instructions for completing a self-study training module. Upon completion of the module, students will sign a confidentiality agreement. Students should save a copy of the confidentiality agreement for their own records and upload a copy to Exxat. Some fieldwork sites may require students to undergo additional HIPPA training.

4.9 Background Checks

Many fieldwork sites require criminal background checks prior to starting fieldwork. Occasionally, the background check completed by students prior to entry into SMU is sufficient to meet the fieldwork site's requirements. More often, the site will want a background check that is completed no more than 3 months prior to starting fieldwork. Go to the Student Services page on the SMU website <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services> for information on how to obtain proof of a prior background check or order a new one. It is the student's responsibility to complete these requirements well in advance of starting fieldwork to avoid a delay in start date. A background check can take 3-4 weeks to complete; please factor this in when planning. There may be fees associated with background checks; students are responsible for paying their own fees.

4.10 Fingerprinting/Live Scan

Students are often required to complete fingerprinting prior to working with pediatric clients. Some sites may require the Live Scan method and will provide you with the necessary forms and specific instructions.

4.11 Drug Screening

Students may be requested to complete drug screening. The student must find out from the specific site what type of testing is required and whether this is done by the fieldwork site or to be completed by the student. If preferred by the fieldwork site, students may be asked to schedule their own drug screenings for a fee. Instructions are available on the Student Services page: <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services>.

If you use marijuana recreationally, it is recommended that you consult with your physician prior to a drug screening. You may not pass a drug screen if there is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in your system. The SMU Student Health and Counseling Center recommends abstaining from marijuana use or getting a prescription for medicinal cannabinoid if you are required to complete a drug screening.

4.12 N95 mask

The N95 mask is a lightweight, nose-and-mouth respirator that can provide some level of

Visit our website: <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/occupational-therapy-fieldwork-education>

protection from airborne pathogens. Students may be required to be fitted for the N95 mask prior to fieldwork. Resources for obtaining a N95 mask fitting can be found online. The student is responsible for the cost of N95 mask fit testing.

5. Planning and Preparing for Fieldwork

5.1 Contacting the Fieldwork Site Prior to Fieldwork

Level I Fieldwork- No clinical placements are scheduled in 2021

Students receive assignments for Level I typically in mid-late April. The student is responsible for contacting the site as soon as possible to schedule the specific dates of the fieldwork experience and to request/confirm the onboarding requirements for the site. It is imperative that students begin the onboarding processes immediately as these often take time.

Level II Fieldwork

Many fieldwork sites require students to complete an interview before confirming a student for a Level II placement. The fieldwork site will usually inform a student in advance when an interview is necessary, and the student will contact the site directly to schedule the interview. In some instances, interviews are competitive with other potential students from other programs. Other times, the interview is non-competitive and intended to be informational and to ensure a match. Students are encouraged to schedule a practice interview with the AFWC or another faculty of their choice; all faculty are available to support students with this interview process.

If contacted by a site to interview, the student should attempt to schedule the interview at a time that does not interfere with SMU classes. If this is not possible and the student will have to miss a class to attend a fieldwork interview, the student is required to notify the academic fieldwork coordinator as well as obtain advanced permission from the instructor of the class affected. The student is responsible for making up any missed work and course content.

At least four weeks prior to the start of the scheduled Level II Fieldwork, students will contact the Fieldwork Educator to verify the start date, arrival time and location where they will meet their Fieldwork Educator.

5.2 Financial Aid and Financial Planning

Student loans and other financial aid vary widely. Students must check with the Financial Aid Office to explore financial planning and options to meet their financial obligations during fieldwork. Level II Fieldwork is usually 40 hours per week for 24 weeks. Level II Fieldwork is a rigorous time, and students will be required to complete learning activities in addition to the 40 hours per week at the fieldwork site. **Employment in addition to Level II Fieldwork is strongly discouraged.**

5.3 Requesting Accommodations and ADA Guidelines

Under ADA, fieldwork sites are obligated to make reasonable accommodations for a qualified student with a disability under the following conditions:

1. The student requests accommodations in advance of beginning their Level II placement.
2. The requested accommodations do not cause undue hardship on the operations of the specific site.
3. The requested accommodations do not fundamentally alter the nature of the services

provided at the site.

4. Student can demonstrate ability to maintain ***essential job functions*** required at the site.

The request for accommodations cannot be used to deny a fieldwork placement if the student is otherwise able to ***fulfill the essential job functions***. The fieldwork site is expected to maintain any requests for accommodations as confidential information.

Whether to request accommodations, as well as when and how to do so, are solely the student's decision. Requests for disability accommodations at fieldwork sites should be addressed with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), which will consult with the AFWC. If clinical accommodations are approved by the DRC, the method of notification to the site will be determined jointly by the AFWC, DRC, and the student. If a student who has a documented disability chooses to request accommodations during fieldwork, the student is encouraged to contact the DRC as early as possible. A student may request accommodations after a fieldwork assignment is already in progress; however, evaluation of the students' performance prior to disclosure will not be changed retroactively based on the disclosure of a disability. Students are encouraged to access the SMU DRC <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-affairs/disability-resource-center> for more information.

6. Professional Behaviors During Fieldwork

6.1 Professional Conduct

All fieldwork students are required to maintain professional behavior and adhere to legal and ethical standards as representatives of Samuel Merritt University, the fieldwork site, and the occupational therapy profession. Students are responsible for adhering to the professional behavior standards as stated in the:

- Samuel Merritt University Occupational Therapy Department Student Handbook
- Samuel Merritt University Student Handbook
- AOTA's Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics.

6.2 Site-Specific Professional Expectations

During fieldwork, the student is functioning as an employee of the fieldwork site. Students are expected to adhere to all professional standards and policies of the site, including work schedule, attendance, and dress requirements. It is the student's responsibility to clarify site-specific dress standards prior to each fieldwork assignment. Dress standards are based on safety, therapeutic, and professional image considerations. The following is a summary of common dress standards for occupational therapy practice:

Table 4. Professional Dress Code Requirements

Name tags	Worn visibly at all times
Hair	Worn neatly (tied back if needed) to avoid interfering with therapy activities
Nails	Appropriate length for physical handling of clients
Fragrances	No perfume, cologne or other body fragrances due to the potential negative effect on clients who have impaired respiratory or neurological function
Jewelry	Should be minimal and should not interfere with therapy activities. Some areas such as ICU request jewelry removal before entering.
Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Close-toed▪ Flat-heeled▪ Slip-resistant soles
Pants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No jeans▪ No exercise or yoga pants▪ Undergarments and skin should remain concealed when bending and reaching
Shirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No T-shirts, tank tops or exercise attire▪ Undergarments and skin should remain concealed when bending and reaching
Lab coats	May be required
Tattoos and piercings	Some settings may require that tattoos and piercings be covered while at work. If you have extensive tattoos and piercings, please check with your site prior to the start of fieldwork to obtain guidelines.

6.3 Client Confidentiality

Client charts are a confidential and legal document and must be treated as such. Students must adhere to HIPAA standards and to each fieldwork site's specific policies pertaining to client confidentiality and client records. Students can be dismissed from fieldwork sites for misuse, tampering with client charts or accessing information about clients not on their caseload. Information that is divulged to students about any client during fieldwork is to be kept confidential. When client information is being shared for learning purposes or when case presentations are required, students will refer to clients using initials or pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

6.4 Mandatory Reporting

Students receive information about preventing and reporting elder abuse during their academic coursework. Students are required to sign a statement confirming they have this information and agree to report if they see an incidence of elder abuse.

In addition, occupational therapy practitioners are mandated by federal law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to state child protective services agencies. Statutes and information about reporting procedures for each state are available on the child welfare website www.childwelfare.gov.

6.5 Occupational Injury Protocol

If a student becomes injured during fieldwork, the student is expected to follow the Occupational Injury Protocol as described in the Appendix of this manual and on SMU's website at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/faculty-and-staff/human-resources>. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with this protocol prior to starting fieldwork.

6.6 Sexual Harassment Policy

Samuel Merritt University's sexual harassment policy applies to students who are on fieldwork. As defined in the *SMU Catalog and Student Handbook*, sexual harassment is any "unwelcome sexual or gender-based verbal, written, online and/or physical conduct." Trust your gut feeling and contact the AFWC immediately if you have any concerns that you are being sexually harassed.

Other SMU staff here to support you are:

Maria Salas
SMU Title IX Coordinator
(510) 879-9200 extension 7339
msalas@samuelmerritt.edu

Craig Elliott
Title IX Deputy Coordinator
(510) 879-9252
celliott@samuelmerritt.edu

6.7 Holidays and Absences

Samuel Merritt University allows up to **three total days** of any student absence (which may include site holidays or sick days) per 12-week rotation. However, if a fieldwork site has specific requirements that do not allow any days off, the school defers to such policy.

The student is allowed time off for holidays observed by the fieldwork site; SMU academic calendar holidays are not days off for students who are in fieldwork. If the fieldwork site observes more than three days of holidays during a student's rotation, the AFWC and the fieldwork educator will collaboratively determine an alternate plan. For example, the student may either extend the duration of the fieldwork or the student may be assigned to work on an independent project to continue accruing fieldwork hours.

In addition to site holidays, Samuel Merritt University's occupational therapy program allows students to take time off for illness and emergencies. A fieldwork site may require documentation to support such an absence requested/taken by a student. If a student is absent from fieldwork for more than three days during a 12-week rotation, the student is responsible for arranging to make up the missed time.

6.8 Updating Health Status and Contact Information

If a student develops a health condition that may limit their ability to fulfill the essential job functions for a fieldwork assignment, the student must inform the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator *immediately*. Please refer to the essential skills as delineated in the document entitled "Occupational Therapy Technical Standard" found on Samuel Merritt's website at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/programs/doctor-and-master-occupational-therapy>.

The student must provide the AFWC with current address and phone contact information over the course of fieldwork.

6.9 Note of Appreciation

Within two weeks following the completion of fieldwork assignments, students are encouraged to write a note to their Fieldwork Educators, thanking them for their time and professional commitment to provide fieldwork experiences.

7. Contingency Planning for Level II Fieldwork

7.1 Communication Is Key

Students must be proactive in obtaining regular, ongoing feedback from their Fieldwork Educators regarding their clinical progress over the course fieldwork. If areas of concern regarding student performance are identified early, the student, Fieldwork Educator and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator will have a better opportunity to address those concerns. The student is encouraged to directly communicate with the FE on a regular basis to clarify whether the student is meeting the required clinical expectations for fieldwork. Available tools to facilitate this communication process include:

- Regularly scheduled supervision meetings (frequency may range from daily to weekly, depending on the FE and the practice setting)
- Completion and discussion of the Level II Fieldwork, Student Feedback Regarding Fieldwork Supervision Process form (provided in the Appendix of this manual) to facilitate communication of student needs
- Completion and discussion of the Level II Fieldwork, 4 Week and 8 Week Evaluation forms (provided in the Appendix)
- Completion of the Fieldwork Essential Assessment Tool (FEAT) with the FE and possibly with the AFWC in attendance
- Completion of the Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) and sharing the evaluation with the FE
- Reviewing the Level II Fieldwork, AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) for the Occupational Therapy Student (provided in the Appendix) at midterm and final.

During fieldwork, students can access the above communication tools on Canvas. The SEFWE will be available on EXXAT. The FWPE will be completed by the fieldwork educator online via Formstack.

Students are encouraged to discuss their learning needs and preferences with Fieldwork Educators at the beginning of each fieldwork assignment. This communication process will likely improve the quality of supervision and enhance the student's learning experience during fieldwork.

If concerns arise...

- If, at any time, a FE communicates any concern about a student passing the fieldwork placement, the student must **immediately contact the AFWC** to report this information.
- If a student has any concerns about how the fieldwork is progressing, the student must communicate these concerns to the AFWC in a timely manner, before the situation worsens.
- The AFWC works with both the student and the FE to support the student's successful completion of the fieldwork assignment.

- Development of a learning contract may improve communication between the student and the Fieldwork Educator to facilitate successful completion of fieldwork. Chapter 8 of this manual provides more information about learning contracts. Learning contract templates will be available to the student on Canvas during fieldwork.

7.2 Minimum Entry-level Clinical Skills

To pass each fieldwork placement, a student must demonstrate the minimum competency level of an entry level occupational therapist in that practice setting. SMU uses AOTA's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) scoring guidelines to determine whether minimum entry-level skills have been met. A copy of this evaluation form is provided in the Appendix of this manual. It is important to note that by the end of fieldwork, students must achieve **proficient performance** in **three fundamentals of practice**: 1) Adheres to the American Occupational Therapy Association's Code of Ethics and all federal, state, and facility regulations, 2) Adheres to safety regulations and reports/documents incidents appropriately, and 3) Ensures the safety of self and others during all fieldwork related activities by anticipating potentially unsafe situations and taking steps to prevent accidents. Failure to achieve *proficient performance* as defined by the FWPE scoring guide in any of the three aforementioned fundamental skills will result in failing a fieldwork placement.

If a Fieldwork Educator and the AFWC determine that a student has not successfully completed the fieldwork assignment due to inability to demonstrate the minimum entry level clinical skills for the site, the student shall receive a failing grade for the fieldwork course. This determination may be made either at the end of the 12-week placement or sooner but should be apparent by the 10th week. Failing fieldwork should never be a surprise to a student, and mediation should always be tried first.

7.3 Student Request to Discontinue Fieldwork

If for any reason a student wishes to discontinue a Level II Fieldwork placement, the student must continue attending the fieldwork assignment while taking the following actions:

1. **Immediately notify the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.** State the areas of concern and the student's proposed resolution. Initial action should focus on resolution, including the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator acting as an intermediary so that the student may complete the fieldwork assignment in a manner that is acceptable to the student, Fieldwork Educator, and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.
2. Once a student has expressed concern about continuing with the fieldwork assignment, an **intervention process will be initiated by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.** This may include but is not limited to: meeting with the student and the Fieldwork Educator, separately or together; site visit by the AFWC; developing a learning contract to address concerns; or removal of the student from the site.
3. If a student leaves the Level II Fieldwork site **without prior permission** from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, the student **may receive a failing grade.** The only exception is where the

situation would involve bodily harm and endangerment to the student; the circumstances must be confirmed through investigation by the AFWC.

4. If the student refuses to go through the process described in item 2, the student will receive a failing grade.

5. If a student goes through the process described in item 2 and the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator deems the situation irresolvable, the AFWC decides whether or not to withdraw a student from a site. Poor clinical or professional performance of the student is not a legitimate reason for withdrawing a student from a fieldwork placement.

6. If the reason for the withdrawal is *not* related to student performance, the AFWC will conduct an investigation and may give the student an “In Progress” grade and allow the student to complete the fieldwork course at another site. There are no guarantees regarding the start date, geographic location or practice setting for the alternative site. Fieldwork hours completed at the first site may *not* count toward the required 12 weeks per fieldwork.

7.4 Disciplinary Action Due to Violation of SMU Policy

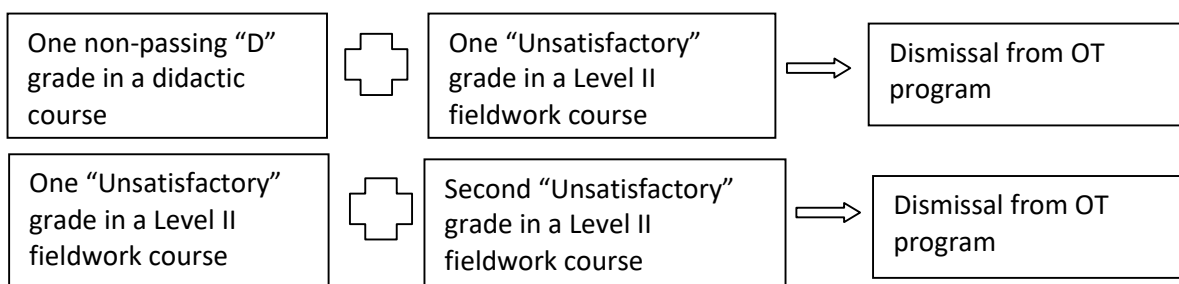
Students enrolled at Samuel Merritt University assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the philosophy of the University, the professional code of ethics, and state laws and regulations pertaining to their profession. Issues which could result in disciplinary action, receiving a non-passing grade for a fieldwork assignment or expulsion from the OT program include, but are not limited to:

- Violation of the ethical practice of occupational therapy
- Absence without contacting the Fieldwork Educator within 2 hours of failure to arrive
- Being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescriptive psychotropic drugs, or bringing these items to the fieldwork site
- Bringing firearms or other weapons onto the property of the fieldwork site
- Academic dishonesty or plagiarism
- Behaviors which endanger or compromise the safety of clients or other staff.

A list of behaviors for which students are subject to disciplinary action is contained in the **Samuel Merritt University Student Handbook**. All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this information as it pertains to fieldwork.

7.5 OT Departmental Policy Regarding Non-Passing Grades for Fieldwork Courses

To successfully complete the OT program, a **student is only allowed to receive one non-passing grade of “D” or “Unsatisfactory,” received either in a didactic course or in a Level II fieldwork course.** The SMU Student Handbook states that **a student who receives two non-passing grades as defined above will be dismissed from the OT program.** The flowcharts below illustrate the different scenarios involving Level II Fieldwork that would result in a dismissal from the program.



A student who needs to repeat a fieldwork course due to receiving a failing grade must pay the usual tuition to repeat the 6-unit course. Every effort will be made to find another site for the student who needs to repeat a fieldwork course. For students who need to repeat a fieldwork course, there are no guarantees about finding another site in accordance with the student's preferences for geographic or practice setting.

7.6 Impact on Progression Through the Curriculum

Should a student need to withdraw, delay or repeat fieldwork for any reason, there are no guarantees about when another fieldwork placement can be scheduled. For MOT students needing to repeat a fieldwork, this waiting period for a placement may further delay their graduation from the program.

For OTD students, ACOTE stipulates that the capstone experience can only be started after completion of all other coursework and Level II fieldwork. Thus, the need to repeat or restart a fieldwork rotation would delay the start of the 14-week capstone experience and subsequent graduation from the program.

7.7 Leave of Absence (LOA)

If a student needs to take a leave of absence (LOA) from the academic program while waiting for an available fieldwork site, the student must complete and submit documentation as required by the Registrar. This LOA must be approved by the AFWC, and only students who are in good academic standing are allowed to take a LOA. If students receive financial aid, they should contact the SMU financial aid office before taking a LOA to determine the financial implications.

8. Learning Contracts

8.1 Introduction to Learning Contracts

In addition to site-specific weekly student learning objectives (a sample Level II Fieldwork learning objectives is provided in the Appendix of this manual and other examples can be accessed from AOTA www.aota.org), some students benefit from the additional structure and clarity provided by individualized learning contracts. A learning contract is useful when specific professional or clinical behaviors need improvement.

The learning contract is an agreement that is developed collaboratively by the student and the Fieldwork Educator. The learning contract should specify:

1. The learning objective
2. The resources and strategies required to accomplish the objective
3. The methods and criteria for evaluating whether the objective has been met
4. The target timeline for accomplishing the learning objective.

8.2 How to Prepare a Learning Contract

Step 1: Determine the student's learning needs. "A learning need is the gap between where you are now, and where you want to be regarding a particular set of competencies" (Knowles, 1986, p. 28).

Step 2: Determine the specific learning objective. Learning objectives usually contain an action verb such as *to increase, demonstrate, apply, or interpret*, and are written in operational terms that are meaningful to the learner. The objective should specify what the student will learn, and may address knowledge acquisition, practice skills, or interpersonal behaviors. Objectives should be specific and measurable. For example, if a student has a learning need in the area of assisting clients with transfers, a specific learning objective may be: *The student will safely transfer 5 clients between their bed and wheelchair without any prompting from the fieldwork educator.*

Step 3: Specify learning resources and strategies. Describe **how** the student will go about accomplishing each objective. Resources pertain to material or human factors that the student plans to use, and strategies relate to learning activities that the student will employ. For example, if the student's learning objective is to increase competency and safety with performing transfers, the resources or strategies may entail:

- Observe the fieldwork educator and other experienced therapists perform transfers
- Review textbooks and academic course materials pertaining to transfer techniques
- Review the fieldwork site's written policies and safety guidelines regarding transfers
- Create cue cards containing safety checklists and the sequence of steps for various types of transfers
- Practice performing transfers with the fieldwork educator or with peers

- Perform transfers with clients under the guidance and supervision of the fieldwork educator.

Step 4: Specify the methods for evaluating the student's learning. Describe what evidence will be collected to assess the student's accomplishment of the learning objective. In the example provided, **observation by the fieldwork educator** would be the primary evaluation **method** to determine the student's safety and competency with transferring clients.

Step 5: Specify the criteria for meeting the learning objective. In the sample learning objective provided above, "**safely**" and "**without any prompting from the fieldwork educator**" are the **criteria** for accomplishment. While developing the learning contract with the student, it would be helpful to have the student identify specific safety parameters for transfers, such as: locking the brakes on the wheelchair and the bed, ensuring adherence to weight bearing or hip precaution as applicable, monitoring the client's vital signs, or managing medical equipment and lines properly.

Step 6: Review the completed learning contract with the fieldwork site's student coordinator and/or the AFWC. The following questions may be used to guide the review process:

- Is the learning objective clear, understandable and realistic?
- Does the learning objective describe what the student proposes to learn?
- Are the learning strategies and resources appropriate?
- Is the evaluation method relevant to the objective?
- Are the evaluation criteria clear and measurable?

Step 7: Carry out the contract. Once the learning contract is finalized, determine a target date for completion.

Refer to <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/ot/fieldwork-forms> for a sample learning contract and examples of learning contract templates.

9. The NBCOT Certification Exam

9.1 About the NBCOT certification exam

Passing the NBCOT certification exam entitles an individual to use the designation Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR). Although each state's licensure law is unique, in general, individuals need to pass the NBCOT certification exam before they are eligible to obtain a state license and practice as an occupational therapist in the United States.

The NBCOT certification exam is a computer-based exam that is designed to evaluate the assimilation of information related to the practice of occupational therapy. The NBCOT website www.nbcot.org provides students with comprehensive information about the exam.

9.2 Exam preparation process and policies

After the completion of all fieldwork requirements, students are required to take a practice review exam that is similar to the format of the NBCOT exam. In addition, students are provided resources and guidance to establish a study plan for the NBCOT exam. MOT students are eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam after completion of Level II Fieldwork. OTD students are eligible to sit for the NBCOT exam during or after the completion of the two final capstone courses (OT 754 and OT 755). The OT Department Chair will provide additional information about the process and departmental policies regarding the NBCOT exam.

Appendices

Appendix A – Level I Fieldwork Evaluation

Please return this form to Liz Kleine, MOT, OTR/L
Instructor, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Level I
Samuel Merritt University, Occupational Therapy Department
450 - 30th Street, 4th floor, Oakland, CA 94609. FAX **510-457-4008**

Student's name: _____

Fieldwork Educator: _____

Facility (name, city & state) _____

Phone # where Fieldwork Educator may be reached: _____

Total hours of fieldwork completed by the student: _____

Please describe the type of facility and/or patient/clients:

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being completely unsatisfactory, and 10 being outstanding, please rate the student on the following objectives for Fieldwork I. Please keep in mind that the student is only part way through the required OT curriculum, and should be integrating new learning during this Fieldwork I experience. You may mark any item N/A. A copy of this form will be shared with the student.

1. Identifies the various roles and functions of an occupational therapist at this fieldwork setting.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

2. Demonstrates good judgment and clinical reasoning as evidenced by appropriate questions, seeking assistance, responding to feedback, and synthesizing and interpreting information.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

3. Understands how specific activities address specific goals and vary according to patient/client values, life experiences and present life roles.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

4. Recognizes psychosocial and/or Mind Body issues influencing engagement in occupation and in client interventions.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

5. Establishes meaningful, comfortable, therapeutic relationships with patients/clients: understands

the difference between friendship and therapeutic relationships and the ethical responsibilities in a therapeutic relationship.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

6. Displays a positive attitude toward fieldwork responsibilities, peers, staff and institution.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

7. Demonstrates reliable, dependable work habits; timely arrival at scheduled times; and communication of schedule with supervisor.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

8. Maintains non-biased, empathetic interactions with clients.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

9. Dresses appropriately and professionally according to facility dress code.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

10. Develops culturally competent approaches to problem solving that take into account individual differences.

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

Comments:

*****Please discuss any additional strengths or challenges which the student demonstrated, which could impact the student's development into a qualified entry-level occupational therapist.**

Signature of Fieldwork Educator

Date

Appendix B – Level II Fieldwork, Student Feedback Regarding Fieldwork Supervision Process

This sheet is designed to help the student and the Fieldwork Educator assess the fieldwork experience from the student's perspective. This is to be used **after week 3**, so that adjustments can be made for the student to have a fulfilling learning experience. Reviewing this form together is intended to facilitate communication between the student and the Fieldwork Educator. Please send a copy of this form to the AFWC.

Use the following key to complete the items below:

- 1 = not enough, unclear, not meeting student's needs
- 2 = occasionally meets needs, a little more would be helpful
- 3 = meets needs, the just right level
- 4 = sometimes too much but not a major concern
- 5 = consistently too much, more than what the student needs

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments & Explanations
Orientation						
Structure						
Variety of clients						
Variety of interventions						
Supervision						
Independence						
Feedback						
Method of instruction						
Clarity of communication						
Clarity of expectations						
Meetings with supervisor						
Meetings with others						
Supportive environment						
Learning resources						
Accessibility of resources						

Other Comments:

Appendix D- Fieldwork II, Sample Weekly Student Schedule

This sample schedule should be adjusted for each individual student's learning pace and needs.

- Week 1: Orientation to the facility, the inter-professional team, and documentation method
Scheduling – instruction on scheduling at site
Establish weekly meeting time with supervisor
Set expectations between student and fieldwork educator
Observe staff with clients
Familiarize with all OT equipment
- Week 2: Begin orientation to evaluations commonly used in facility (may have begun previous week)
Orient to client safety issues - transfers, restraints, etc. (may have begun previous week)
Begin client treatment with one client (or more at the discretion of the supervising therapist)
- Week 3: Instruction in evaluation, perform portions of evaluations with supervisor
Present/report information about a client at team meeting with supervisor
Discuss plan for final project with supervisor
Assume no more than 25% of caseload typical of an entry level therapist at this facility
- Week 4: Select content and initiate client evaluation, with supervision
Continue with orientation to common evaluation materials – practice time is good
Observe special evaluation (i.e., kitchen or home eval)
- Week 5: Assume 50% of caseload typical of an entry level therapist at this facility if fieldwork educator feels students is ready.
- Week 6: Assume 50% of caseload typical of an entry level therapist at this facility by this week
Discuss case study with supervisor
Supervisor provides written midterm evaluation
- Week 7: Project due
Present project in department in-service
Continue with 50% of caseload typical of an entry level therapist at this facility
- Week 8: Assume 75% of caseload typical of entry level therapist at this facility
Plan case study presentation
- Week 9: Continue 75% caseload
- Week 10: Assume 85-95% of caseload typical for an entry level therapist at this facility
- Week 11: Continue with full caseload
Present case study in department in-service
- Week 12: Complete treatment and prepare for other therapist to assume caseload before finish
Final evaluation with supervisor using AOTA fieldwork performance evaluation

Typical caseload equivalent in typical facility:

25% = 1-2 hours of client contact per day	50% = 3 hours of client contact per day
75% = 4-5 hours of client contact per day	full = 6-7.5 hours of client contact per day

Appendix E – Level II Fieldwork, AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) for the Occupational Therapy Student

Fieldwork educators will receive email instructions for completing and submitting the AOTA fieldwork evaluation online via Formstack.

Rating Scale

Rating	Definition
4 – Exemplary performance	Demonstrates satisfactory competence in specific skills consistently; demonstrates substantial breadth and depth in understanding and/or skillful application of fundamental knowledge and skills.
3 - Proficient performance	Demonstrates satisfactory competence in specific skills; demonstrates adequate understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills.
2 - Emerging performance	Demonstrates limited competence in specific skills (inconsistencies may be evident); demonstrates limited understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills (displays some gaps and/or inaccuracies).
1 -Unsatisfactory performance	Fails to demonstrate competence in specific skills; performs in an inappropriate manner; demonstrates inadequate understanding and/or application of fundamental knowledge and skills; (demonstrates significant gaps and/or inaccuracies).

Scoring Guidelines

The *midterm* evaluation does not have a PASS/FAIL status.

To receive a passing score on the *final* FWPE:

1. All items included must be scored.
2. The sum score must be 111 or higher.
3. All items must have a score of 2 or higher. Scores of 1 on any of the items are not allowed.
4. A score of 3 or higher is required on these items
 - # 1: Adheres to the American Occupational Therapy Association's Code of Ethics and all federal, state, and facility regulations
 - # 2: Adheres to safety regulations and reports/documents incidents appropriately
 - # 3: Ensures the safety of self and others during all fieldwork related activities by anticipating potentially unsafe situations and taking steps to prevent accidents.

Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) for the Occupational Therapy Student (Revised in 2020)

FUNDAMENTALS OF PRACTICE	
1	Adheres to the American Occupational Therapy Association's Code of Ethics and all federal, state, and facility regulations. Examples: Medicare, Medicaid, client privacy, social media, human subject research
2	Adheres to safety regulations and reports/documents incidents appropriately. Examples: fire safety, OSHA regulations, body substance precautions, emergency procedures
3	Ensures the safety of self and others during all fieldwork related activities by anticipating potentially unsafe situations and taking steps to prevent accidents. Examples: body mechanics, medical safety, equipment safety, client-specific precautions, contraindications, community safety
BASIC TENETS	
4	Articulates the values, beliefs, and distinct perspective of the occupational therapy profession to clients and other relevant parties clearly, confidently, and accurately. Examples: families, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administration, the public
5	Articulates the value of occupation as a method and desired outcome of occupational therapy to clients and other relevant parties clearly, confidently, and accurately. Examples: families, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administration, the public
6	Articulates the role of occupational therapy practitioners to clients and other relevant parties clearly, confidently, and accurately. Examples: families, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administration, the public
SCREENING AND EVALUATION	
7	Articulates a clear and logical rationale for the evaluation process based on client information, contexts, theories, frames of reference, and/or practice models.
8	Obtains sufficient and necessary information from relevant sources throughout the evaluation process. Examples: record or chart review, client, family, caregivers, service providers
9	Selects relevant screening and assessment tools based on various factors. Examples: Psychosocial factors, client priorities, needs, and concerns about occupational performance and participation, theoretical support, evidence, practice context, funding sources, cultural relevance
10	Determines the client's occupational profile and occupational performance through interview and other appropriate evaluation methods.

	<p>Occupational profile: Summary of the client's occupational history and experiences, patterns of daily living, interests, values, and needs.</p> <p>Occupational performance: Act of doing and accomplishing a selected action (performance skill), activity, or occupation that results from the dynamic transaction among the client, the context, and the activity. Improving or enabling skills and patterns in occupational performance leads to engagement in occupations or activities.</p>
11	<p>Evaluates and analyzes client factors and contexts that support or hinder occupational performance.</p> <p>Client factors: Specific capacities, characteristics, or beliefs that reside within the person and that influence performance in occupations. Client factors include values, beliefs, and spirituality; body functions (includes psychological functions); and body structures.</p> <p>Contexts: Variety of interrelated conditions within and surrounding the client that influence performance, including cultural, personal, physical, social, temporal, and virtual contexts. Includes the consideration of all client centered components including psychosocial factors</p>
12	<p>Administers standardized and non-standardized assessments and surveys accurately and efficiently to ensure findings are valid and reliable. Examples: follows assessment protocols, adheres to time guidelines</p>
13	<p>Modifies evaluation procedures based on client factors and contexts. Examples: uses a quiet space, breaks up evaluation into smaller parts, provides multisensory instructions</p>
14	<p>Interprets evaluation results to determine the client's occupational performance strengths and challenges.</p>
15	<p>Synthesizes and documents the results of the evaluation process clearly, accurately, and concisely, using systematic methods to record the client's occupational performance.</p>
INTERVENTION	
16	<p>Articulates a clear and logical rationale for the intervention process based on the evaluation results, contexts, theories, frames of reference, practice models, and evidence.</p>
17	<p>Establishes an accurate and appropriate client-centered plan based on the evaluation results, contexts, theories, frames of reference, and/or practice models. Examples: creates relevant and measurable goals in collaboration with the client and/or family/caregivers; recommends additional consultation and referrals</p>
18	<p>Uses evidence from research and relevant resources to make informed intervention decisions.</p>
19	<p>Selects client-centered and occupation-based interventions that motivate and challenge the client to achieve established goals that support targeted outcomes. Includes the consideration of all client centered components including psychosocial factors</p>
20	<p>Implements client-centered and occupation-based intervention plans. Includes the consideration of all client centered components including psychosocial factors</p>
21	<p>Chooses and, if needed, modifies intervention approach to achieve established goals that support targeted outcomes. Examples: prevention, restoration, maintenance, promotion</p>
22	<p>Modifies task and/or environment to maximize the client's performance.</p>

	Examples: upgrades/downgrades task; arranges client's workspace for optimal performance
23	Modifies the intervention plan and determines the need for continuation or discontinuation of services based on the client's status.
24	Documents the client's response to services in a manner that demonstrates the effectiveness of interventions.
MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES	
25	Demonstrates through practice or discussion the ability to collaborate with and assign appropriate tasks to the occupational therapy assistant, occupational therapy aide, or others to whom responsibilities might be assigned, while remaining responsible for all aspects of treatment. Examples: paraprofessionals, nurses' aides, volunteers
26	Demonstrates through practice or discussion an understanding of costs and funding systems related to occupational therapy services, such as federal, state, third party, and private payers. Examples: billing for OT services, inventory and ordering of supplies for OT services, and options for client procurement of adaptive equipment
27	Demonstrates knowledge about the organization. Examples: mission and vision, accreditation status, licensing, specialty certifications
28	Meets productivity standards or volume of work expected of occupational therapy students.
COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS	
29	Communicates clearly and effectively, both verbally and nonverbally. Examples: clients, families, caregivers, colleagues, service providers, administration, the public
30	Produces clear and accurate documentation. Examples: legibility, spelling, punctuation, grammar, adherence to electronic health documentation requirements
31	Collaborates with fieldwork educator(s) to maximize the learning experience. Examples: initiates communication, asks for feedback about performance, identifies own strengths and challenges
32	Takes responsibility for attaining professional competence by seeking out learning opportunities and interactions with fieldwork educator(s) and others.
33	Responds constructively to feedback in a timely manner.
34	Demonstrates consistent and acceptable work behaviors. Examples: punctuality, initiative, preparedness, flexibility, dependability, professional appearance
35	Demonstrates effective time management. Examples: plans ahead, adheres to schedules, completes work in expected timeframe
36	Manages relationships effectively through therapeutic use of self and adjusts approach to meet the needs of clients and others.
37	Demonstrates respect for diversity factors of others. Examples: culture, socioeconomic status, beliefs, identity

Appendix F – Occupational Injuries Protocol

Provided below and at <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/faculty-and-staff/human-resources>

Electronic Injury/Illness Reporting Process For: Employees/Clinical Students/Work Study Students

If you have sustained an injury/illness and are in any way directly affiliated with Samuel Merritt University please follow the steps outlined here:

- **IMMEDIATELY** report it to the Instructor, Manager, Supervisor, or Professor. This must be done the SAME DAY of the occurrence.
- **IMMEDIATELY** complete the Electronic Report of Injury/Illness (eROI) on the Sutter Intranet under Forms and Tools if you are able to gain access to the Sutter Network. SAME DAY. <http://shreddeflow.sutterhealth.org/eROI/Pages/injuryform.aspx>
**This must be done on campus from an employee work computer. When prompted to sign in use your Sutter credentials.*
Username: sutter-chs\{username}
Password: {sutter password}
- If you are remote and without Sutter access your Supervisor/Instructor can submit the eROI for you if they have access. If NEITHER of these options work you MUST IMMEDIATELY contact either Lisa Tullis or Erick Wilkinson.
 - Lisa Tullis, Sutter Health Workers Compensation Coordinator
(510) 869-8698 | Direct
(855) 771-0326 | Fax
tullisl@sutterhealth.org
 - Erick Wilkinson, Safety Officer Alta Bates Summit
(510) 869-8724 | Office
(510) 869-6146 | Fax
(510) 725-1403 | Cell
wilki1@sutterhealth.org
- **IMMEDIATELY** contact Employee Health
 - Employee Health Hours: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday
 - **Alta Bates Summit Medical Center Employee Health/Occupational Medicine**
3232 Elm Street, Suite “A” Oakland, CA 94609
Phone: 510-869-8920, Fax: 510-869-6814
 - **Eden Medical Center Employee Health/Occupational Medicine**
20130 Lake Chabot Rd, Ste 201
Castro Valley, CA 94546
Phone: 510-727-3058, Fax: 510-727-3397
 - **Sutter Delta Medical Center Employee Health/Occupational Medicine**
3903 Lone Tree Way, Ste 310
Antioch, CA 94509
Phone: 925-779-2970, Fax: 925-779-2975
- If outside Employee Health Hours and medical attention is required, go to the Emergency Department.

Visit our website: <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/occupational-therapy-fieldwork-education>

- If in a facility WITHOUT a nearby Occupational Medicine Office and treatment is requested, please contact Lisa Tullis for referral to alternate treatment facilities.

Important Reporting Information

OT, Level II AFWC

Domenique Embrey

510-879-9200 x7520

OT, Level I AFWC

Liz Kleine

510-879-9200 x7519



Student Acknowledgment of Receiving the Fieldwork Manual

Please sign and return this form immediately to the Fieldwork Administrative Assistant acknowledging the receipt of the Fieldwork Manual.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have been
(print student's name)
provided a copy of the Samuel Merritt University, Occupational Therapy Department,
Fieldwork Manual, either in print or electronically.

Please initial each of the following items:

_____ I understand that I am responsible for knowing, understanding and accepting the
information provided in this manual, and the requirements that are discussed within this
Fieldwork Manual.

_____ I understand and agree to abide by the university and departmental policies as
stated in this manual.

_____ I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information contained in the Samuel
Merritt University Student Handbook as found on Samuel Merritt University's website and
the OT Program Student Handbook as it pertains to my academic standing, behavior,
eligibility and performance at fieldwork sites.

_____ I authorize the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator to share person information on my
behalf to fieldwork sites as described in this manual to facilitate my successful completion
of the fieldwork requirements of occupational therapy education.

Student's Signature

Date