



The Master's Program curriculum design includes developmentally sequenced clinical experiences throughout the course of study.

Clinical experiences are considered part of the curriculum, and are designed to support learning relative to the curriculum themes. Class discussions and assignments draw upon clinical experiences to build an understanding of the relationship between academic coursework and occupational therapy practice. These experiences are in a variety of settings, from community based to institutions, with individuals of varying ages, ability levels, and health conditions. Over the course of the academic program, students are exposed to all curriculum objectives in fieldwork experiences. Many courses have additional community based projects, service learning and assignments that are not formal fieldwork experiences.

Becoming an occupational therapist encompasses development of clinical as well as professional skills. Communication, receptiveness to feedback, taking initiative, dependability and other interpersonal behaviors are essential learning outcomes of fieldwork and coursework.

Two levels of fieldwork experiences, Fieldwork I and II, are offered in accordance with the "Standards of an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist." These experiences are supervised by occupational therapists, as well as other professionals depending on the setting and the purpose of the fieldwork.

Fieldwork I

Fieldwork I experiences are incorporated in academic courses. Fieldwork I (FW I) is an integral component of learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the occupational therapist. From the beginning of the program, structured opportunities for conducting observation, interview, assessment, evaluation and treatment in clinical settings enable the student to apply course work and theoretical information to practice settings. Course instructors plan Fieldwork I assignments in a developmental progression for gradual building of clinical skills. In early courses, FW I expectations focus on developing observation and interviewing skills. Subsequent fieldwork experiences are designed to advance students' evaluation and intervention skills. Most FW I experiences are local (within 50 miles of Chapel Hill). Students are frequently assigned to FW sites outside of the Triangle for the week-long experiences.

Fieldwork II

Fieldwork II is a separate course for which students will register as OCCT720A and OCCT 720B. Except in rare circumstances FW II is a full time experience, in which the OT student follows the schedule of the site. In many hospitals and rehabilitation centers occupational therapists may work weekends or four 10 hour days, so students should not assume M-F, 8:00-5:00 schedules. All occupational therapy students must complete Level II Fieldwork within 24 months following completion of academic preparation.

Fieldwork Site selection

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) schedules and assigns all FW placements. Input from the student is considered, with the AFWC having final authority to make assignments. Student input is discussed in FW Seminars, and students are given opportunities to indicate preferences about upcoming FW. The exception to this is the first semester placements that are made prior to the student beginning the program.

In addition to student preferences, the considerations for site assignment include the quality and appropriateness of the learning experience, variety of experiences available in a site, and the contract status. A further consideration is to ensure continuity of students each year at sites that have a history of collaboration and support for UNC students.

For FW II, priority for local sites is given when the student is a primary caregiver for a child, older adult or disabled person. Many sites are outside the Triangle Area. Students arrange and pay for travel, transportation and housing. We have a small number of out-of-state sites and at some times fieldwork sites in other countries are an option.