

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities of the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

The Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFWC) is one of the leadership positions in an occupational therapy (OT) and occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program that is required for candidacy and full accreditation. This position is essential to any OT or OTA program. It requires a person with extensive skill, the ability to be a core faculty member, and a desire for a multifaceted role within the program. The AFWC is also a member of the AOTA's Academic Leadership Council (ALC). This body meets twice a year in the spring and fall, where ideas are shared, current issues are discussed, and opportunities are offered to stay updated on educational practices.

The primary role of the AFWC is to create, implement, and oversee Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) C Standards. Additional responsibilities of the AFWC include providing valuable input to curricular design & redesign, policy development & updates, overall administration capabilities, and engaging in teaching & scholarship.

This position may be best met as a faculty member available during all 12 months of the year, should that match the program's curricular design.

ACOTE (2018) A.2.3 requires the program to identify an individual for this role who has "the expertise necessary to ensure appropriate curriculum design, content delivery, and program evaluation," as well as expertise in teaching responsibility and content delivery. Additionally, per ACOTE (2018), C.1.1, the AFWC is responsible for ensuring the fieldwork education program synthesizes with the academic institution's didactic program.

The AFWC is designated as Core Faculty (A.2.4), which means "Faculty members employed in the occupational therapy educational program whose job responsibilities, at a minimum, include curriculum design, teaching, and student advisement, regardless of the position title" (ACOTE, 2018). The AFWC can take the role of advisement either within the didactic portion of the student's education or during their time on fieldwork.

A.2.4 also requires **sufficient release time and support** to meet the fieldwork program's needs. Each university/college can define release times in a different manner and will map back to each university/college's program mission, vision, and structure.

This document is meant to provide administrators with helpful considerations when creating workload and hiring.

Essential Skills and Functions of the AFWC, including but not limited to the following:

- **Leadership and strong verbal and written communication skills** are essential. The AFWC needs to be able to coordinate multiple ongoing projects and communicate effectively with community partners, as well as the faculty and program director. Specific skills include:
 - Ability to locate, market, recruit, develop, and evaluate new and existing fieldwork sites (including site visits).
 - Initiate and negotiate affiliation agreements/clinical training agreements/MOUs (legal staff or administrative staff may complete).
 - Schedule and confirm student placements.
 - Monitor student progress during a fieldwork rotation and provide mediation as needed.
 - Develop and update fieldwork educator handbooks, student manuals, and fieldwork course syllabi.

- **Collaborative and innovative thinking** are essential to allow fieldwork experiences to expand occupational therapy into emerging professional practice areas, create opportunities for inter-professional learning, and apply creative problem-solving.
 - Collaborate with fieldwork sites and fieldwork educators to design learning experiences that integrate program learning objectives and outcomes into their specific context.
 - Advise fieldwork educators who are working with a struggling student.
 - Develop site capacity through mentorship and educational opportunities for fieldwork educators to improve supervisory and instructional skills.
 - Identify new and emerging practice areas and design programs that support student learning in these areas.

- **Organizational skills and ability to understand curriculum design** to manage multiple student placements and all placement aspects, ensure consistency of experience to the curriculum, and proactively inform the program about new and innovative practice initiatives.
 - Create and implement a model of Level I and II Fieldwork practice and procedures to ensure that they match the program's curriculum design.
 - Ensure that students meet site health and onboarding requirements for fieldwork.
 - Manage all fieldwork data collected for fieldwork program evaluation, curriculum analysis, and accreditation.
 - Develop, implement, and evaluate fieldwork education policy.
 - Develop protocol/procedures to ensure program compliance with ACOTE Standards and prepare for accreditation.

- **Teaching and expertise with advising and provision of remediation techniques** when needed to ensure student success, whenever possible.
 - Advise students on developing skills needed for site specific objectives.
 - Aid students with managing communication skills required for interactions with teams, clients, and other community partners on site.
 - Communicate with sites and students regularly to monitor progress toward success.

- **Management and higher-level administrative tasks**, including but not limited to:
 - Initiate the creation of affiliation agreements with new sites as needed.
 - Collect and interpret data for fieldwork program evaluation and curriculum development.
 - Act as liaison between academic faculty and fieldwork educators to integrate fieldwork with academic curricula.
 - Market the program to outside partners and build and develop community relationships.
 - Supervise student workers and/or administrative staff who may offer support for completing departmental tasks.

References

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