

Fieldwork Absences and Attendance Policy – Preceptor Fieldwork Guide 2023

Students must earn a minimum of 1000 hours of clinical placement experience. Each week is typically recorded as 37.5 hours or 7.5 hour days in InPlace. Some variation may exist at individual placement sites. As with academic coursework, **full attendance is expected in fieldwork placements**. Attendance is defined as full participation of the student in the assigned daily activities conducted at the facility in which the student is placed. This is consistent with the professional behaviour expected in the MScOT program.

Academic relief/accommodation for extended absences can be granted for medical, religious or compassionate grounds (see Student Handbook attendance policy for further details and processes to follow). As such, they will not be granted for:

- Travel departure/return before or after a holiday season/academic break
- Matters of personal convenience (e.g., family celebrations, weddings, etc.)
- Matters related to commuting
- Employment (or interviews)

Fieldwork Schedule:

Students will follow the schedule set by their preceptor(s). Daily hours of the placement, time off for working overtime, or special arrangements to make up for time lost will be handled with the preceptor and/or the site's student placement coordinator as per the site's guidelines or recommendations. Some sites require evening and weekend work, and this will be noted in the placement description.

Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time and leave at the time designated by their fieldwork preceptor
- Only ask for time off when an absence is unavoidable e.g. illness, bereavement.
- **Request changes to the fieldwork hours by discussing with the fieldwork course instructor first.** If approval is given, the student can submit their request to their fieldwork preceptor and site coordinator for approval preferably at least one week in advance when possible.
- Work on their preceptor's schedule, including statutory holidays. Note that statutory holidays do not count as an absence if the preceptor is taking that day off.

Absences, including due to illness:

Students will discuss options for making up any missed time during placement with their preceptor and/or site coordinator so that absences are not carried forward whenever possible. Where lost time due to absence does occur, and is not made up during that placement block, hours entered into the *Final CBF-OT evaluation* on InPlace will reflect these missed hours. Any time missed and subsequently made up during the placement block should NOT be recorded in the CBF-OT.

Students can make up missed hours by:

- Staying late
- Arriving early
- Working a weekend shift

- Completing work at home
- Any other work assigned by their preceptor.

Attendance at a Professional Conference:

Attending a conference related to occupational therapy is generally considered fieldwork by the school. If a student is planning to attend a professional conference that is scheduled during a fieldwork placement, the student must notify the fieldwork course instructor, their preceptor, and the site's student placement coordinator about the conference as soon as possible, and preferably before the placement begins for approval. To ensure that learning objectives and competency development are not impacted by the absence, the student should also offer to make up the missed placement time if their preceptor and/or site coordinator believe it is necessary.

Earning Additional Buffer Fieldwork Hours:

Students gain 1050 hours of clinical experience during the 4 fieldwork blocks. When absences due to statutory holidays are considered, there is little room for additional missed days to meet the 1000-hour requirement. As such students are strongly encouraged to make up missed time during a placement block in case unanticipated absences occur.

Students can record up to 2 additional hours of fieldwork per week during each placement block. This captures the additional time spent on fieldwork-related activities e.g., preparation at home, early arrival, or late departure. These additional hours are not counted in the required 1000 fieldwork hours but can be used to support unanticipated absences such as illness or bereavement leave.