

Occupational Therapy Observation/Volunteer Work

The purpose of occupational therapy observation/volunteer work is to expand your knowledge of occupational therapy across practice areas and to broaden your understanding of the needs of clients in various treatment settings and across age groups. A *minimum of 30 observation/volunteer hours is required* in order to be eligible to apply to the professional program. Of those, a minimum of 20 occupational therapy observation/volunteer hours with a registered occupational therapist (OTR) or certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA) is required. It is strongly encouraged, to gain an understanding of the scope of occupational therapy practice, that applicants volunteer in a variety of settings. Your other 10 hours can be in any related area, including activities with a community service organization or additional hours in occupational therapy. Remember, observation/volunteering in a health care or community agency is a commitment and a privilege, not a right. Please be respectful. You need to ask permission to do volunteer work, not demand to do it. Please ask if there are any special procedures to be completed before your volunteer work begins.

The Occupational Therapy faculty believe that through observation/volunteer work, you have the opportunity to:

1. Observe persons of all ages at work and play.
2. Establish interpersonal relationships.
3. Develop leadership skills in community service.
4. Become aware of the problems encountered by persons with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities.
5. Learn more about yourself as an individual. For example, do you enjoy working with persons with disabilities? Do you have the patience required for long-term care?
6. Develop initiative in seeking out observation/volunteer work opportunities.
7. Demonstrate responsibility through observation/volunteer work; i.e., being punctual, carrying out assigned duties, etc.
8. Gain knowledge and experience which will make academic courses more meaningful, and Level I and II Fieldwork less threatening. In Level I and II Fieldwork, the Occupational Therapy students are in the process of making the transition from students to professionals with the responsibilities inherent in a profession in the health fields. Attitude and performance in assigned occupational therapy duties are constantly evaluated, and observation/volunteer work can be invaluable in preparing for this phase of your education as an occupational therapist.

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