

# Occupational Therapy Practice Educator Guidance

Curriculum 2021

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# Introduction

This document has been prepared to provide practice educators with the necessary information to supervise students on practice placements. It has been prepared in conjunction with students' placement portfolio, which contains all placement documentation and procedures needed by both students and Practice Educators (PE's). The placement portfolio is available to PE's on the practice support net.

It is hoped that it will be useful. Feedback to [vanessa2.parmenter@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:vanessa2.parmenter@uwe.ac.uk) concerning any ways in which it could be improved would be welcomed.

## Programme Philosophy and Aims

### Philosophy of the Programme

The programme aims to strike a balance between academic learning and practice based learning that satisfies the requirements of the professional and regulatory organisations and offers high quality learning experiences to students both within the university and in clinical practice.

Practice placement experiences are provided to students in a wide range of established generic and specialist fields, provided by statutory and non-statutory services across the region. There are also a limited number of placements in 'role emerging' settings, in which students have the opportunity to pioneer the concept of occupational therapy in services where the profession has not previously had a presence.

Practice placements need to relate closely to academic progression and for this reason, students undertake a practice placement at each level of the programme, the learning outcomes of which correlate closely with the themes of each level. The themed progression of the programme has its basis in occupational science in that pre-registration practitioners need to understand the relationship between occupation and health and well-being before considering challenges to occupations. These challenges could take the form of disease, ill-health, impairment or barriers to participation.

## Structure of the Programme

The above philosophy develops thematically through the three levels which constitute the academic structure of the undergraduate curriculum, as follows:

### Level 1 – Exploring Occupation

The social, institutional, cultural and physical contexts which affect people's health and well-being through their impact on their occupations are considered alongside integral human factors.

- Introduces the student to the concepts of occupational science, the disciplines of anatomy & physiology, psychology and human factors
- These subjects lay the foundations for the study of occupation and its therapeutic use
- This culminates in the student being able to demonstrate evidence of how occupation supports health and well-being
- Students then engage in a module to provide a basic foundation of practical skills in readiness for the first placement

### Level 2 – Valuing Occupation

- Considers how occupational therapy can ameliorate the impact of congenital or acquired health challenges on a person's occupations
- Explores a range of conditions and appropriate occupational therapy interventions based different approaches and the media utilised and their application.
- The professional practice experience allows the student to focus on interventions used by occupational therapists, their evidence base, and the unique contribution of occupational therapy
- Students are encouraged to develop evidence based practice skills to justify interventions
- The level will conclude with the student being able to discuss how occupational therapy can transform the lives of people with complex and multiple challenges to occupation and enable occupational performance

### Level 3 – Promoting Occupation

- Further develop the student's clinical reasoning skills particularly in the unique contribution of occupational therapy in the context of public health and health promotion
- The student develops research skills, as well as how to apply evidence to support and change practice
- The practice placement allows the student to consolidate their professional skills and reflect on how theory and practice interlink
- Completion of this level will culminate in the student being able to critically evaluate how occupational therapists enable occupation
- Understanding the skill set of an occupational therapist and how it can be applied in practice with service users in a diverse range of settings, as well as individual service users with complex/multiple occupational challenges

The Occupational Therapy Programme is designed to include a wide variety of learning opportunities for students, in recognition of the life experience and learning styles that the students bring with them in to Higher Education. These learning opportunities include case study groups; task orientated group work, discussion groups, simulation, service learning, as well as more traditional forums such as lectures and seminars. Students must also demonstrate a commitment to independent study in addition to all the formal learning opportunities presented to them on the programme. This allows for an increased focus on the application of theory to practice, in the learning environments on offer.

### Theory - Practice Link

The thematic content of each level includes the Practice Placement module(s). The learning outcomes for each placement include components from each of the modules that will be enhanced and demonstrated in practice. Additionally level 2 and 3 placement modules have written assignments, based on the theme for that level. In completing the practice assignment the student will draw on learning from each of the modules studied. Throughout the theoretical modules students are encouraged to reflect on learning and its practical application. They are encouraged to keep supporting evidence in a continuing Professional Practice Portfolio.

### Aims of the Programme

The main aim of the programme is to ensure that occupational therapists qualifying from the University of the West of England are reflective practitioners, who take responsibility for their own professional development, and are able to contribute to the safe, ethical and effective delivery of occupational therapy services in a wide variety of inter-professional and multicultural contexts.

The programme aims to enable students to:

- Fulfil the requirements to be eligible to apply for registration as an occupational therapist with the Health Professions' Council
- Appreciate the broader context of health and social care activities
- Be self-aware, self-directed and sensitive to the needs of others
- Evaluate knowledge and practice in relation to theory
- Develop the key skills necessary to practice competently and safely as an occupational therapist
- Develop effective and appropriate relationships with service users and carers in line with the College of Occupational Therapists' (COT) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (COT 2010)
- Function effectively within an inter-professional team, with colleagues and other agencies
- Develop and promote a value base in practice that respects equality and diversity
- Develop leadership qualities and skills
- Develop and promote evidence based practice, and personal commitment to lifelong learning
- Engage in the critical analysis of academic discourse in order to continually develop practice
- Understand the purpose and processes involved in ensuring quality in service delivery

## Programme Structure and Outline

### Programme Structure (Curriculum 2021)

The structure reflects the primacy of occupational therapy as a discipline but also reflects the inter-professional nature of professional practice and seeks to acknowledge other disciplines that inform and enhance occupational therapy education. Emphasis is placed on integrating theory with practice, clinical reasoning and problem solving in order to provide the best possible education for the student and health and social care for the individual.

The three academic levels equate to the three academic years of study. Level 1 studies conclude with the first full practice experience, which takes place at the end of the year one, April-July. The second period of practice is in January-March of year two. The final, level 3, practice placement takes place between October-December of the final year.

Although the levels build upon one another, progress through each module of the award is perceived to be dynamic; the various components being interrelated and interdependent.

The programme has recently been revalidated with the Royal College of Occupational Therapy [RCOT] which means that students joining the programme from September 2021 will be following a slightly different structure. The modules that make up the new programme are: -

LEVEL	MODULE TITLE	CREDITS
<b>Level 1</b>		
	Human Occupation, Health and Well-being: part 1	30
	Human Occupation, Health and Well-being: part 2	15
	Fundamentals of Human Anatomy and Physiology	15
	Aspects of Human Performance	30
	Foundations of Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 1	30
<b>Level 2</b>		
	Occupational Therapy and Physical Challenges	30
	Occupational Therapy and Psychosocial Challenges	30

Informing Practice through Research and Enquiry	15
Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 2	15
Occupational Therapy and Complex Needs	15
Skills and Strategies for Occupational Therapy Practice	15

### Level 3

Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 3	15
Professional Reflexivity in Practice	15
Healthy Futures	15
Promoting Occupation and Leadership in Evolving Practice	30
Leadership Skill in Context	15
Research and Evidence in Practice	30

## Module Outlines

### Level 4 – Exploring Occupation

**Modules** – Human Occupation, Health and Well-being Parts One and Two; Fundamentals of Human Anatomy and Physiology; Aspects of Human Performance; Foundations of Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 1.

- The social, institutional, cultural and physical contexts which affect people’s health and well-being through their impact on their occupations are considered alongside integral human factors.
- Introduces the student to the concepts of occupational science, the disciplines of anatomy & physiology, psychology, sociology and human factors
- These subjects lay the foundations for the study of occupation and its therapeutic use
- The level culminates in the student being able to demonstrate evidence of how occupation supports health and well-being; followed by the first practice placement

### Level 5 – Valuing Occupation

**Modules** Occupational Therapy and Psychosocial Challenges; Occupational Therapy and Physical Challenges; Informing Practice through Research and Inquiry; Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 2; Occupational Therapy and Complex Needs; Skills and Strategies for Occupational Therapy Practice

- Considers how occupational therapy can ameliorate the impact of congenital or acquired health challenges on a person’s occupations
- Explore a range of conditions and occupational therapy interventions based different approaches, the media utilised and their application.
- The professional practice experience allows the student to focus on interventions used by occupational therapists, their evidence base, and the unique contribution of occupational therapy
- Students are encouraged to develop evidence-based practice skills to justify interventions and to begin to understand research methods and processes

- The level will conclude with the student being able to discuss how occupational therapy can transform the lives of people with complex and multiple challenges to occupation and enable occupational performance

### Level 6 – Promoting Occupation

**Modules** – Professional Practice for Occupational Therapy 3; Professional Reflexivity in Practice; Healthy Futures; Promoting Occupation and Leadership in Evolving Practice; Leadership Skills in Context; Research and Evidence in Practice

- Further develops your clinical reasoning skills particularly considering the unique contribution of occupational therapy in the context of public health and health promotion
- You develop your research skills, as well as how to apply evidence to support and change practice
- The practice placement allows you to consolidate and develop further your professional skills, including leadership and entrepreneurial capabilities and reflect on how theory and practice interlink
- You have an opportunity to work collaboratively with other professional groups to look at how future advances in medical knowledge and technology will influence and improve practice
- Completion of this level will culminate in you being able to critically evaluate how occupational therapists enable occupation, within diverse settings, which can include taking a leadership perspective
- Understanding the skill set of an occupational therapist and how it can be applied in practice within in a diverse range of settings, including within health promotion, where the client can be a community, or group, as well as individual service users with complex/multiple occupational challenges is invaluable as an end point to your student journey

Students enrolled on the programme before 2021 will continue on the old programme structure (Curriculum 2015);

LEVEL	MODULE TITLE	CREDITS
<b>Level 1</b>		
	Exploring Occupation, Health & Well-being part 1	30
	Exploring Occupation, Health & Well-being part 2	15
	Elements of Human Performance for Occupation part 1	30
	Elements of Human Performance for Occupation part 2	15
	Foundations for Practice	15
	Occupational Therapy Practice 1	15
<b>Level 2</b>		
	Inter-professional Module – Service Improvement	15
	Physical Challenges and Occupation	30
	Psychosocial Challenges and Occupation	30
	Complex Needs and Occupation	15

Skills and Strategies for Occupational Therapy	15
Occupational Therapy Practice 2	15
<b>Level 3</b>	
Becoming an Inquirer	15
Promoting Occupation and Leadership	45
Research and Evidence in Occupational Therapy	30
Occupational Therapy Practice 3	30

## Practice Education

### Philosophy

Practice education is an indispensable and integral part of the programme. Changes in health and social care provision have resulted in a widening range of work environments and increasing autonomy for the occupational therapist. It is therefore essential that the practice modules and their associated outcomes reflect this trend while providing the 1000 hours required for qualification in a diverse variety of settings.

Emphasis is placed upon the student meeting the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists and the outcomes of the Curriculum Framework Guidance of the College of Occupational Therapists. A personal Practice Portfolio enables the student, UWE and PE's to work together to ensure each student attains an appropriate level and breadth of professional practice prior to qualification.

The student is enabled to develop his/her awareness of opportunities offered by the range of practice settings available. The student will be guided by the module outcomes and the learning contract in searching for, and capitalising on, practice learning resources. The ability to transfer skills from one setting to another is seen as vital in health and social care today.

Each practice module facilitates the integration of theory into practice. It is anticipated that the student will develop new knowledge and skills in the practice environment, rather than merely consolidating what has previously been learnt in the University setting.

Learning outcomes that are achieved at Level 1 initially are further developed and added to in Level 2 prior to reaching the higher levels of learning by the end of Level 3. The learning process is seen to follow a spiral pathway; the transfer of professional skills from one level to the next reinforcing and enhancing previous learning whilst the student adds further skills as he/she "travels" from one practice experience to another.

By the end of the practice modules the student will be able to demonstrate, within the context of occupation as the primary focus, the ability to: -

- adapt therapeutic and social skills to different practice environments
- make independent decisions with appropriate justification
- manage a caseload

- work as part of a team
- recognise the role of other health and social care professions
- recognise the scope and limitations of their skills
- engage in continuing professional development

### Practice Hours

Practice experience is gained through 3 practice modules. Students will be placed in a wide variety of settings where they can achieve the module learning outcomes. These placements are not chosen by the student but are managed through the Practice placement Office (PPO), guided by the entries in the individual student's Practice Portfolio.

Students complete thirty weeks of practice (a minimum of thirty six hours per week), and are supervised in practice by accredited Practice Educators. Start and finish times are to be arranged at the discretion of the Practice Educator and, subject to the demands of patient care and departmental organisation, in negotiation with the student. The 36 hours per week of student practice should include time for reflection and study including ½ day study leave per week.

Further and extensive details on the how the placements work are provided in the students' *Placement Portfolio* (available on Practice Support net).

### Practice Assessment

The assessment is based on the Learning Contract negotiated and constructed in collaboration between the Practice Educator, the student and the midway tutor. It must incorporate the module placement competencies and any personal goals outstanding from a previous placement or identified during the current placement. It must also include contributions from service users and you will be able to indicate this in the appropriate tick box on the infal assessment form.

The 'criteria for evaluation' provide the assessment of the learning on the placement. The assessment is done by the practice educator, and is usually undertaken at or towards the end of the placement.

Further and extensive details on assessment are provided in the students' *Placement Portfolio* (openly available on Practice Support net).

### Assessment of placement learning

Students are assessed via their personalised learning contracts and have to demonstrate achievement of *all* the placement competencies in order to pass the placement.

If the PE has concerns about any aspect of a student's performance the PE must contact the placement support tutor as early as possible and ensure that the failure protocol is understood and followed. This is available on the Practice Support Net (follow guidance by programme) <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/practicesupportnet> .

The placement is either pass or fail, there are no additional gradings of the placements however if you feel that your student has excelled in 3 or more areas of the placement competencies, you can nominate them for a Certificate of Excellence. To nominate your student, you will need to download the form from the PSNET and give specific examples of how the student has excelled against 3 or more

of the placement competencies. You will need to submit this form to the university, details are available on the PSNET. Both yourself and the apprentice will be notified when a certificate is awarded.

There is a written assignment related to level 3 placements (levels 2 and 3 for students enrolled before 2015) – the results of this contribute towards the student's degree classification. This assignment is marked by academic staff.

### Support for Students and Practice Educators

Just prior to going out on placement each student is allocated a UWE Placement Support Tutor to review their learning contract and conduct a midway tutorial. The midway tutorial is an opportunity for the student to discuss their strengths and weaknesses related to the learning needs in their learning contract with the practice educator (PE) and a UWE staff member. The placement support tutor is also a point of contact for the PE. Do ask your student for the contact details.

Midway tutorials are normally carried out by telephone. Exceptions to this, where the UWE tutor can carry out a visit to the student and PE at the placement location are outlined below.

- The normal process of interaction between UWE, the student on placement and the PE will be as follows:
- Pre-placement preparation week at UWE – students are advised of the UWE tutor who will be carrying out the midway tutorial
- By end of week 2 of placement the students will have liaised with their PE and made contact with their allocated UWE tutor to arrange a date for the midway tutorial (Please note that the onus is on the student to make these arrangements)
- Beginning of week 3 of placement – student to e-mail learning contract to UWE tutor.
- UWE tutor to review learning contract and feedback to student prior to midway tutorial. It is reviewed for consistency with learning outcomes, achievability and fairness, and any comments or suggestions to modify it will be communicated to both the student and the practice educator. The midway tutor will aim to respond within 5 working days.
- Week 4/5/6 of placement – midway tutorial to take place over telephone, or otherwise, as outlined above. UWE tutors and students have been provided with updated agendas for the discussion in the midway tutorial that they should follow.
- The 'Criteria for Evaluation' in the learning contract provide the student and the practice educator (PE) with the benchmarks for success or failure of the student to achieve the placement learning outcomes.
  
- The UWE tutor must have the opportunity to speak both with the student and the PE separately. Ideally, the student and the PE should be able to speak to the UWE tutor separately, in confidence. Follow-up telephone calls can be arranged if there are matters outstanding.

### Completion Documentation

At the end of the placement the following needs to be agreed and signed off by the Practice Educator:

- Hours Sheet
- Learning Contract
- Practice Educators report

Templates and guidance for the above can be found in the 'Completion Documentation' section of the *Placement Portfolio* (available on Practice Support net).

**Templates can also be downloaded directly from the Practice Support Net (follow guidance by programme).** <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/practicesupportnet>

It is the student's responsibility to return 2 copies of the learning contract, their personal goals record and the correct copies of the practice front sheet, duly completed and signed by the Practice Educator(s) by the published date and time. *Failure to hand in this by the expected date will result in the placement being marked as a non-submission.* The PE should retain copies of this documentation.