

Indiana State University
College of Health and Human Services
Department of Applied Medicine and Rehabilitation
M.S. Occupational Therapy

Observation Hours Guidelines

Applicants to the occupational therapy program must complete an observation totaling 20 hours. These observation hours must occur in a minimum of one environment where occupational therapy could potentially be delivered. When possible, observation with an occupational therapist in the authentic environment is highly recommended. However, we are aware that this may not be available to all applicants.

Service is an integral part of Indiana State University and the Occupational Therapy Program. Successful applicants will be given opportunities for service throughout the program. However, the immediate purpose of completing service in an occupational therapy or occupational therapy related situations is to increase the applicant's knowledge of the profession.

The objective of completing observations is to confirm the applicant's decision to become an occupational therapist.

Recommendations for Successful Completion of Observation Hours

Selection of Observation Site. Please consider the following when selecting a site:

- Review practice and emerging practice areas described on the American Occupational Therapy Association website. www.aota.org
 - Plan to observe at a minimum of one practice areas
- Investigate sites available in your location.
 - Is an occupational therapy practitioner available at this site?
 - What age groups do they serve?
 - What populations (example: Individual's with Intellectual Disabilities)

Contact the potential site.

- Allow enough time. Most sites are extremely busy and you may need to make several phone calls before locating the individual with whom you need to talk.
 - Do not expect to start your observation hours that week or even for several weeks.
- Once you have made contact
 - Let the site know the purpose of the hours (for application to the OT Program)
 - Be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - Number of hours that you would like to complete
 - Dates that you would be available including the time of day
 - Questions that you may want to ask
 - What are the qualifications (age, membership...)?
 - What may I need to complete prior to starting?
 - Background check

- Orientation
- CPR / First Aid
- Will there be an orientation (time, date, location)?
- How much supervision will you receive?
 - Supervisor may be asked to complete a recommendation form for your application packet.

Once you are onsite:

- Hold yourself to professional standards
 - Be on time
 - Communicate any changes in plan / expectations to the appropriate individuals
 - Respect and adhere by the guidelines provided by the organization
 - Roles and duties
 - Ask when and where it would be appropriate to ask questions
 - Remember that you will be asking a Community Service Supervisor to complete an observation form.

Examples of Community Service Sites that are relevant to Occupational Therapy but may not have a practitioner onsite:

- Special needs camps
- Special Olympics
- Assisted Living Facilities / Long Term Care Facilities
- Homeless centers / shelters
- Diagnosis specific Associations (Autism Association; Arthritis Foundation... Cancer Society...)

If you require additional assistance or have specific questions regarding the Observation Hours Guidelines requirement, please contact the Admissions Coordinator at 812-237-2583