



Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy

# INTERNATIONAL FIELDWORK STUDENT HANDBOOK

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# International Fieldwork Student Manual

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International Fieldwork placements are unique opportunities for Year 2 MScOT students to participate in out-of-country placements. International fieldwork placements are challenging and rewarding experiences in which students are exposed to different cultures, health and social systems and variety of populations. Students can complete an international fieldwork placement during Fieldwork 2, 3 or 4. Students considering applying for an international fieldwork placement can read more [here](#) about reasons for considering international fieldwork and reflections from previous students.

International fieldwork is a privilege for students with strong academic standing and a record of excellent performance in all previous fieldwork placements.

There are three types of international Fieldwork Placements:

1. International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation (ICDR)
2. University Exchange Partnership
3. Established International FW Sites

## [International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation \(ICDR\)](#)

The [International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation](#) (ICDR) is committed to advancing research and education in the rehabilitation sciences to improve the lives of people with disabilities worldwide.

Placements through ICDR are in low- and middle-income countries. More information about the various ICDR country groups can be found [here](#).

## [University Exchange Partnership](#)

The department of OS&OT has exchange agreements with several international universities in countries with more developed and established health care and social services systems (e.g. Sweden, Holland, Australia and Hong Kong). In these placements students are placed within hospitals and community facilities.

## [Established International FW Sites](#)

The department of OS&OT has a few already established sites where we have had successful placements. These countries include Finland, Spain, Italy, Germany, Bahamas, and Madagascar. These placements are predominantly community, private practice, and schools.

## [Process for Applying for International FW](#)

Students are expected to apply for ALL international FW at the start of academic Term 3 in Year 1. This includes FW2, FW3 and FW4.

The process to apply for an international fieldwork opportunity is as follows:

1. Students will submit an application including their top three preferences of countries / sites. Students will respond to a few key questions to explain why they feel they would be a good candidate for an international FW placement. Students may also rank if there are other students with whom they would like to be partnered. Submission form can be found [here](#).

2. Obtain a reference from your FW#1 preceptor or fieldwork site coordinator. Send [this link](#) to both of your references and ask them to submit by mid-July.
3. International Fieldwork coordinator will review all rankings, personal statements, and references. Students will be informed by end of July / early August if they are successfully matched to a site.
4. Once informed you are matched to a site you will confirm that you accept the offer. Students will submit a personal letter of introduction and CV to the International FW Coordinator.
5. Once letter of introduction and CV are received, the International Fieldwork Coordinator will introduce the students to the site and key contacts.

***The specific due dates for each of these activities will be communicated each year.***

## After Match Process – Preparing for International Fieldwork

Once matched to an international fieldwork placement, there are many tasks that require your attention. Do not wait to complete these activities, as they take time.

### *Introduce Yourself*

As soon as you have been introduced to the site and your preceptors, immediately reach out to your site / preceptor to introduce yourself and begin the discussion about your fieldwork placement. If more than one student is matched to the site, collaborate on responses so the site can hear from students collectively.

Once you have spoken to the international FW site, student(s) will create write a:

- **Placement Description:** (high level 2-3 sentences description of what you will be doing and the area of practice. Similar to the placement descriptions that you see on InPlace),
- **CATEGORY of Client Issues:** (these will all be LEAP placements so BL, ML, PL),
- **Fieldwork TYPE:, AREA of Practice: and LIFESPAN:.** You can find the information about all the codes [here](#).

### *Visa Application*

Many students will require a visa to enter the country where you are doing your placement. It is the **YOUR** responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa secured before you travel. **This process can take time, so do make sure you get this in place sooner than later.**

You can ask your site if they have suggestions or recommendations on the most appropriate visa pathway to enter the country as an unpaid student. Additionally, a good starting place is the [Government of Canada](#) website on travel advise. You should also look at the embassy for that country to search for additional visa recommendations.

Please note that visa application requirements vary by country and can also change over time. It is best to search for the current approach. Please let the International FW Coordinator know if you need a letter from OS&OT to support this process.

### *Safety Abroad*

Well in advance of travel you **MUST** complete the [Safety Abroad](#) workshop. This self-paced online learning is a requirement for all U of T students completing an international experiential learning. There is key information about how to ensure you have the right travel health insurance. This information is essential to your safe travel, so you must make sure to focus on all the learning in these modules.

Once complete please send Nella an email at [OT.Clined@utoronto.ca](mailto:OT.Clined@utoronto.ca) to confirm you have completed your Safety Abroad training.

### *Health Insurance*

You will learn in the Safety Abroad modules that you require Health Insurance to travel abroad. If you receive health insurance through University of Toronto (meaning you did not decline as part of your tuition) then you can register for health insurance through U of T. You will require a letter of admission from OS&OT to complete the registration. This letter will be automatically sent to you by the International FW Coordinator a few months before you travel.

### *Funding*

All expenses are the responsibility of the student. This includes flight, accommodations, in country travel and preceptor fees.

There is a needs-based funding opportunity through the Centre for International Experience. You can apply [here](#). Scroll down to the bottom and make sure to click on “Going Abroad, but NOT through CIE?” Then you can click Apply Now. This process is very simple and many of your peers have received supportive funding.

### *Flights and Accommodations*

Once successfully matched, you can begin to explore and book flights and accommodations. Make sure to understand academic expectations and final exam schedules before you choose a departure date. Additionally, make note of the start date of the next term, so you return in time.

In terms of accommodations, please connect with your site / preceptor to see if a) they are offering accommodations or b) they have suggestions for accommodations or neighbourhood. If booking your own, short term stays with AirBnB or VRBO are great options.

## **During International Fieldwork Placement**

Students are to send an email of arrival to the International Fieldwork Coordinator. If students are travelling in a group, one email is sufficient. Additionally, an update email a week or two into the placement is much appreciated. The International Fieldwork Coordinator would like to hear about positive experiences as well as early emerging issues. We are here to support students!

During the placement, we will communicate with all students via email and Quercus. Therefore, it is essential that students check their email **daily** for these essential communications.

During an international placement, students are to immediately contact the Safety Abroad Office for any accidents, illness, theft and breach of security, harassment or sexual assault. Safety Abroad Office has 24-hour assistance accessed by phoning 416-978-2222. They will take a collect call. Students are also asked to contact the [International Fieldwork Coordinator](#) and [Director of Clinical Education](#) via email as soon as possible after the incident.

#### *Learning Objectives and CBFE*

Similar to an in-catchment placement, you will use InPlace to submit your learning objectives and CBFE evaluation. Make sure to provide your preceptor(s) email address. If your preceptor is registered with a regulatory body in their country, please provide that number rather than a registration number with COTO. Additionally, your preceptor may not be familiar with InPlace, so you may need to provide some support in how to use. Reach out to the fieldwork team if you are having difficulties.

Make sure your CBFE is completed by mid-term and final.

### **After International Fieldwork**

After your fieldwork is complete, please share any feedback you have about your experience with the International Fieldwork Coordinator.

Make sure to follow up with your preceptor and site with a letter of appreciation.