

**Belmont University**  
**School of Occupational Therapy**  
**Experiential Component**

**I. Goal:**

The goal of the doctoral experiential component is to develop occupational therapists with advanced skills (those beyond a generalist level). The Experiential Component is an integral part of the program's curriculum design in that it is consistent with the tenets of both Tyler's (1949) traditional model of curricular design and the Social Change Model (Wagner, et al). The experiential component reflects Tyler's (1949) traditional model of curricular design by emphasizing the schools' mission and program goals to drive the content of the experiential component. The experiential component is an in-depth experience that will reflect the broad purposes of the social change model. The purpose of the experiential component is to enhance student learning and professional development while facilitating positive social change in the community by undertaking actions which will help all people increase their ability to participate in their chosen occupations.

**Advanced Practice:** is defined as the demonstration of skills that reflect an expert knowledge base, complex decision-making skills and clinical competencies for expanded practice, the characteristics of which are shaped by the context in which services are being provided (adapted from the International Council of Nursing: <http://www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/defining-advanced-practice.aspx> ).

**II. Description**

Consistent with the University's mission: "providing an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith", Belmont's School of Occupational Therapy, in collaboration with faculty and organizational partners, provides students with an experiential component project.

The experiential component is an individually designed, in-depth, student experience at a practice setting in one or more of the following areas of study: clinical excellence, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education or theory development. It requires students to develop an individualized learning plan with specific objectives designed to meet the goals outlined in their learning plan. The practice settings will be consistent with the program's curriculum design. Each setting will provide supervision for the student appropriate to the setting and as agreed upon in collaboration with the students' Faculty Mentor and the Experiential Component Coordinator (The supervision may or may not be provided by an occupational therapist). The student will be mentored by an individual with expertise consistent with the student's area of focus (this individual may or may not be identified with the practice setting).

The experiential component creates varied meaningful opportunities that primarily impact our local community. However, at times an opportunity presents itself that could provide students with a unique experience that is not available in Nashville and meets the goals and objectives identified in the

student's individualized learning plan. For example, there are also opportunities for national and international experiences. In rare instances when this may occur, the student must fill out and submit an experiential component exception form to the experiential component coordinator. A team will then consider and evaluate the student's request on a case by case basis.

Requirements of the experiential component are as follows:

- The experience must be on a full-time basis, a minimum of 16 weeks, and include documentation of 640 hours.
- No more than 20% of the 640 hours can be spent outside of the mentored practice setting.
- The goal of the experiential component is to develop occupational therapists with advanced skills consistent with the program's curricular design (ACOTE, 2011). The experiential component must be consistent with the students individual learning plan and objectives and the culminating project.
- The student must be able to demonstrate advanced knowledge to practice through the experiential activities.
- All Level II Fieldwork and the experiential component must be completed within 24 months of successful completion of didactic coursework prior to beginning the experiential component.
- Prior fieldwork or work experience may not be substituted for the experiential component.
- If a student is completing their experiential component within a setting/organization where they are currently employed for any part of the 16-week requirement, additional activities must be designed as part of the experiential component to meet the requirements of the in-depth doctoral experiential component.

### **Experiential Component: Members and Definitions**

To assist the student in their planning and execution of their experiential component, several individuals will be involved in the process: Faculty Advisor, Experiential Component Coordinator, Experiential Component Assistant, Faculty Mentor and an Expert Mentor. Each of these individuals will play a role in developing the student through the process as follows:

- **Academic Faculty Advisor:** A faculty advisor is assigned to each student upon admission to the program. The Faculty advisor will assist the student in planning and the verification of the required service experiences and hours each semester. As part of the advisement, students are expected to reflect on the service experience each semester for the purpose of guiding the students' personal and professional development. These advisements are used in preparation for the experiential component planning that occurs in OTD 6440 and 6445.
- **Experiential Component Coordinator(s):** Provides students with the structure and information needed to begin the development of the respective student's experiential component in OTD

6440: Experiential Project Planning I (Fall Year 2). The Experiential Component Coordinator will provide didactic instruction on topics related to the experiential component. He/she works with the faculty mentor(s) and the Experiential Component Assistant to identify and confirm sites to support each student's experiential component. The Experiential Component Coordinator oversees the activities of the Experiential Coordinator Assistant, monitors the projects sites to ensure necessary resources are in place to support the student's individualized objectives. The Experiential Component Coordinator will assist the Faculty Mentors and Expert Mentors as needed throughout the planning and execution of the experiential component.

- **Experiential Component Assistant:** Ensures that all operational policies and procedures related to the experiential component are followed. The Experiential Component Assistant assists in communicating and coordinating sites including the development of and signing of Memoranda of Understanding for the experiential component sites. The experiential component assistant provides students with training and assistance with the utilization of online, electronic platform for the student portfolios. Additionally, the Assistant provides oversight for the required service hours, as verified by faculty advisor, which must be provided each didactic semester.
- **Faculty Mentor (Experiential Component Project Planning Instructor)** (OTD 6445): A faculty member with demonstrated expertise in the student's focused area of study, population, and/or identified roles will serve as an advisor for the development of the experiential component. The Faculty Mentor begins work with the student and is the primary instructor in OTD 6445: Experiential Component Project Planning (Spring Year 2). The faculty mentor will guide the student in determining their desired learning objectives and learning activities to meet the student's individualized objectives. Ongoing advisement, coaching and monitoring of the student's adherence to the learning contract for the duration of the experiential component will be provided.

The Faculty Mentor will collaborate with the Experiential Component Coordinator to meet stated course benchmarks. The Faculty Mentor will also confer with the Experiential Component Coordinator and Assistant to confirm and finalize appropriate experiential settings.

The Faculty Mentor will provide formative and summative evaluation of the student's progress in the experiential component OTD 6680 course in the Spring of Year 3. The Faculty Mentor will provide their current CV to the student to be included in the final portfolio.

- **\*Expert Mentor:** An Expert Mentor is someone who has skills and understanding in their area of expertise developed over time through a sound educational base as well as a multitude of experiences (Dracup & Bryan-Brown, 2004). The Expert Mentor will be identified in OTD 6445 (Spring Year 2) by the student and/or the site as having content specific knowledge to guide the student in their experiential semester. The Expert Mentor will complete a memorandum of understanding including their stated roles and responsibilities. This process will be initiated by the Experiential Component Assistant. The Expert Mentor provides ongoing supervision for the student by participating in ongoing meetings with the student to discuss issues encountered during the experiential project as well as provide feedback and guidance for the development of

the skills outlined in the student's individual objectives (formative assessment). The Expert Mentor will also provide a summative assessment of the student to the Faculty Mentor at the end of the experiential component.

- **\*Site Supervisor:** A site supervisor provides general supervision for a student at the designated project site when the expert mentor is not physically located at the assigned location. The site supervisor is someone who works with the population of interest and for the agency where the student is completing their individualized learning plan. The supervisor will provide guidance for the student regarding site specific policies and procedures.

**\*these member roles may overlap**

### **Definitions**

- **Mentoring:** A relationship between two people in which one person (the mentor) is dedicated to the personal and professional growth of the other (the mentee). A mentor has more experience and knowledge than the mentee.
- **Individualized learning plan:** A specific set of objectives and activities that reflect the student's area of focus for advanced skill development demonstrating consistency with one of the four curricular themes: Service, Leadership, Clinical Excellence, and Scholarship as well as linking to the students' culminating project.
- **Experiential component project:** Projects developed in collaboration with the faculty mentor, the expert mentor and the practice setting that will support the student's individualized learning plan.

### **III. Process**

Students will be oriented to the Experiential Component in their first semester in Leadership and Public Policy (OTD 6220). In this class, students will learn the Social Change Model (Wagner, 2006). Students will explore concepts of populations, and be introduced to community agencies as part of their advising process and service experiences. Consistent with the Social Change Model (Wagner, 2006) the faculty has developed service opportunities with a variety of agencies for the students throughout the Nashville community. The requirement of service throughout the OTD program is intended to help the student develop their experiences in various roles and amongst various populations. To this end the student with guidance from their academic faculty advisor, will plan and reflect upon their experiences and interests. A personal vision statement is developed in OTD 6220 Leadership and Public Policy course. These experiences are intended to help the student develop their individual learning plan and experiential component in OTD 6440 and OTD 6445, Experiential Project Planning I and II.

In the Spring of Year 1, students will continue exploring population needs and opportunities for scholarship in Quantitative Research OTD 6150 as they begin the development of their research project. Students will continue their research project in OTD 6250 (Qualitative Research), OTD 6350 (Research I)

and 6450 (Research II). The curricular themes, populations and/or population needs reflected in the research project will be further developed in the students' experiential component.

During OTD 6210 Managing OT Delivery System in Summer Year 1, students identify and adapt existing management models or develop new service provision models to respond to societal needs and emerging practice areas. Students explore program development, program evaluation and business proposals.

In the Fall and Spring semester of their second year, students will begin the planning process for their experiential component in OTD 6440 and OTD 6445, including the development of an individualized learning plan and selecting a designated site and expert mentor. The student's individualized learning plan will reflect the curricular themes with specific learning objectives to support the student's development of advanced skills. Community agencies will share their ideas and needs for potential "projects" that may contribute to the student's individual learning plan.

The Experiential Component Coordinator and Assistant will ensure there is a memorandum of understanding that includes individualized specific objectives, plans for supervision and mentoring, and responsibilities of all parties.

In OTD 6445 Experiential Project Planning II) students will receive the course outline for OTD 6680 (Experiential Component) that will outline the expectations for the student for the semester with specific assignment and due dates over the course of the 16-week experiential component. These assignments will allow the faculty mentor, the expert mentor and the site supervisor to appropriately monitor the student's progress toward their individualized learning objectives and ensure the experiential component is meeting the needs of the student.

Before the Experiential Component can be initiated the student must successfully complete all didactic coursework, Level II Fieldworks and pass a competency exam as required by the School of Occupational Therapy.

During the experiential component semester, the roles and responsibilities of the student, faculty mentor and expert mentor will be as follows:

**Student:**

- Maintains an electronic portfolio which documents the learning experience, time log, assignments and attainment of objectives.
- Maintains communication with Faculty Mentor and Expert Mentor by completing the assignments as indicated in the course syllabi for OTD 6680.

**The Experiential Component Coordinator and Experiential Component Assistant:**

- Monitor project site(s) to ensure that necessary resources remain in place that support the student's individualized learning objectives.
- Assist faculty mentors as needed to ensure student and expert mentor responsibilities, assignments, and timelines are being followed.

- Train and assist with the utilization of the electronic portfolio.
- Oversee of service experiences

#### **The Faculty Mentor**

- Provides ongoing monitoring and advisement for the student's progression with their individualized learning plan for the duration of the experiential component.
- Performs formative and summative assessment of the student's overall experiential component and assignments as indicated in OTD 6680.
- Communicates and collaborates with expert mentor and/or site supervisor to determine supervision of the student and guidance needed to meet the students' individualized learning objectives.
- Submits student's final grade into Banner.

#### **The Expert Mentor**

- Completes and returns the Memorandum of Understanding to the Experiential Component Assistant.
- Serves as a mentor to the student's professional growth and facilitates attainment of the student's objectives as identified in the student's individualized learning plan.

If the expert mentor is also located at the practice site, supervision will be provided appropriate to the setting and experiential component with the frequency of meetings to be determined by the expert mentor and student (and with consideration of State Licensure Board).

- Provides a formative and summative evaluation of the student and the experiential project to the faculty mentor in OTD 6680.

#### **The Site Supervisor**

- Provides supervision to the student at the assigned location as needed to assist the student directed toward attaining their individualized learning objectives.  
Ensures the student complies with any rules and regulations specific to the agency/site.

### **IV. Evaluation of the Experiential Component**

The formal evaluation mechanism for objective assessment of the student's performance during and at the completion of the doctoral experiential component is maintained in an electronic professional portfolio. This illustrates the student's development of advanced skills and knowledge and documents the design and execution of the student's contributions to the facility. Assignments and reflections will be reviewed throughout the experiential component by the faculty mentor and the expert mentor to ensure that the student is making adequate progress toward successful achievement of their learning plan. The final portfolio is assessed by the faculty mentor and includes the feedback from the expert mentor regarding student performance.

Guidelines for Review and Grading of the Experiential Component Portfolio include:

1. Electronic portfolios are available to the Faculty Mentor for formative and summative review during the experiential component (OTD 6880). Time logs are available to the Expert Mentor throughout the experience.
2. Individual assignments will be assessed (formative assessment) by the Faculty Mentor within 10 days of the submission deadline. If it is deemed that the student has insufficiently completed an assignment, they will have 5 days to resubmit. Inadequate performance on any assignment may result in a delay in the completion of their Experiential Component.
3. Formative and summative assessment of students' site-specific project/program and the students' progress in attaining their individualized goals/objectives will be completed by the Expert Mentor at midterm and final.
4. Final (summative) assessment of the portfolio is completed by the faculty mentor and will include:
  - an assessment of the student's progression towards their learning objectives
  - an evaluation of the student by the expert mentor

A faculty mentor who identifies a student as not making adequate progress during the experiential component must immediately notify the student in writing with a corrective plan. This notification must also be forwarded to the Experiential Component Coordinator. If the student is unable to meet the actions delineated, they will receive a failing grade.

The Experiential Component is a pass/fail grade. To pass, the student must complete all required assignments, satisfactorily complete their individualized learning plan, and receive a satisfactory evaluation from their facility/expert mentor and faculty mentor.

#### References

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (2013). Standards and Interpretive Guide.

Dracup, K., Bryan-Brown, C.W. (2004). From novice to expert to mentor: Shaping the future. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 13 (6), 448-50. Retrieved from <http://ajcc.aacnjournals.org/cgi/content/full/13/6/448>

Tyler, R.W. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wagner, W. (2006). The social change model of leadership: A brief overview. *Concepts & Connections*, 15 (1), 9.

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