Practice Placement Education

Practice placement education is a core component of pre-registration occupational therapy education. Students are required to complete 1000 hours of successful practice placement education to meet the Royal College of Occupational Therapists’ (RCOT 2014) and the World Federation of Occupational Therapists’ (WFOT 2016) standards of education.

Practice placement education for students studying in the UK is delivered via a variety of models, in a range of settings, offering the opportunity to gain experience of integrating theory and practice. It is an important cornerstone of pre-registration education, and can be very influential in shaping the direction of the student’s future career.

References:

Overview
The following articles have been selected by the RCOT education manager (pre-registration education) to provide material that will be of interest to a range of stakeholders who are involved in student education: employers, academic tutors, practice educators and, of course, students themselves. The articles cover a number of areas, from what motivates occupational therapists to become practice educators (Varland et al 2017) through to the benefits of international placement experiences (Haro et al 2014) and factors that may predict practice placement performance (Thew and Harkness 2018, Yu et al 2018).
Selected Evidence

Motivation to take on the role of practice educator

Varland et al (2017) conducted a survey of occupational therapists working in a number of states of the USA. A total of 500 surveys were analysed to identify factors that influence the decision to supervise a student on placement.

Reference:

Practice educator qualities (student perspectives)


Reference:

Influence of practice educators on student learning

Towns and Ashby (2014) carried out semi-structured interviews with six participants to explore students’ perceptions about the influence of practice educators on their understanding of the practical applications of theoretical knowledge.

Reference:
Student experience – intra/interpersonal factors

Healey (2017) utilised an arts-based narrative approach to explore the emotional aspects of placement learning, including emotion management, with seven third year occupational therapy students.

Gribble et al (2018) conducted a longitudinal study involving occupational therapy students from three Australian universities and a control group of business students, to measure changes in occupational therapy students' self-reported emotional intelligence during practice education.

References:

Student outcomes

Thew and Harkness (2018) examined data from eight previous years of a UK MSc pre-registration programme to explore the influence of a range of variables, including prior academic attainment, on practice placement and academic outcomes.

Yu et al (2018) conducted a cross sectional study involving occupational therapy undergraduate students (n=70) to investigate whether interpersonal skills were predictive of practice education performance.

References:

Influence of International placements

Haro et al (2014) conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty occupational therapists who had participated in international practice placements as students, to explore their perceptions about how the experiences gained influenced their future practice.

Reference:
Career Development Framework

The Career Development Framework: Guiding Principles for Occupational Therapy is an overarching set of guiding principles for occupational therapy and offers a structured process to guide careers, learning and development within our profession. It contains four interacting Pillars of Practice (each with nine Career Levels):

- Professional Practice
- Facilitation of Learning
- Leadership
- Evidence, Research and Development

Access the framework at:
www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/learning-zone/career-development-framework

Further reading …

Members can access a wide range of literature through the RCOT Library e-books and e-journals collections, as well as via the CINAHL and Medline databases.

The Library has produced a series of information skills guides to help members get the most of the resources available. They cover a range of subjects, from accessing the e-journal and e-books collections, through to searching databases and carrying out literature searches.

Access the guides at: www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/information-skills

The Library catalogue is available at:
www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue

Access to journal articles

RCOT members can access the full text of these articles via the e-journals collection or, in the case of open access articles, via the link/DOI provided in the reference.

Access the RCOT e-journals collection at:
www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/journals-and-e-journals

The journals and e-journals webpage provides links to the American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT), Australian Occupational Therapy Journal (AOTJ), British Journal of Occupational Therapy (BJOT) and Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy (CJOT).

A wide range of other journals, including Occupational Therapy in Health Care, are available via the ‘additional RCOT e-journals’ link.