

Program Director News

Updates from ACOTE and the AOTA Accreditation Department

Negotiated Rule Making

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The United States Department of Education (USDE) has announced its intention to establish negotiated rulemaking committees to develop proposed regulations for implementation of changes made to the Higher Education Act (HEA) by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA).

Negotiated rulemaking is the process federal agencies use to formulate rules and regulations. The agency (USDE) convenes advisory committee(s) to discuss proposed regulatory changes. The committee consists of 12 to 25 individuals who represent parties that would be affected by the rules. The advisory committee attempts to draft proposed rules by consensus. The proposed rules will be used by the USDE to develop the final regulations.

After consideration of the information received at the regional hearings and in writing, the USDE decided to establish the

following five negotiating committees:

1. Loans-Lender/General Loan Issues;
2. Loans-School-based Loan Issues;
3. Accreditation;
4. Discretionary Grants;
5. General and Non-Loan Programmatic Issues.

The Accreditation Negotiating Committee will focus on the following issues resulting from the HEOA:

1. Distance education and correspondence education;
2. Due process and appeals;
3. Accreditation team members;
4. Operating procedures;
5. Growth monitoring;
6. Teach-out plan approval;
7. Summary of agency actions;
8. Confirmation of disclosure of transfer of credit policies and criteria.

In addition, the Committee will address

unresolved issues from the 2007 negotiated rule making process:

1. Recognition when not fully compliant;
2. Demonstration of compliance within 12 months;
3. Direct assessment programs definition;
4. Definition of recognition;
5. Substantive change;
6. Monitoring throughout period;
7. Subparts C and D-- Recognition process, limitation, suspension and termination;
8. Recordkeeping;
9. Confidentiality.

As a USDE-recognized accrediting agency, ACOTE will be required to comply with the regulations resulting from the rule-making process.

The timetable for the Committees has not been finalized secondary to the transition to a new administration. At this time, interested parties are submitting names for participants.

2009 Biennial Report Timeline

“Biennial reports are due by April 30, 2009.”

At the December meeting, the Council approved the edits on the 2009 Biennial Report form.

The formal request for the Biennial Report and instructions were individually e-mailed to program directors on January 30, 2009 with a due date of **April 30, 2009.**

Programs located in states that begin with the letters (A-M) have reports due in 2009.

OT and OTA programs having full reaccreditation on-site evaluations are exempted from Biennial Report requirements the academic year prior to, the academic year of, and the academic year following the on-site evaluation.

For example, programs having full reaccreditation on-site evaluations between August 1, 2007 and July 31, 2010 will be exempt from 2009 Biennial Report requirements.

Programs will receive notification of ACOTE’s action following review of the reports at the August 2009 Council meeting.

The purpose of the Biennial Report is to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Standards.

The 2009 Biennial Report forms may be viewed online in the Accreditation Forms section at <http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit/Forms.aspx>.

Annual Data Survey

“Annual Data Survey requirements were e-mailed to program directors on January 29, 2009 and must be completed no later than March 15, 2009..”

The Annual Data Survey requirements were e-mailed to program directors on January 29, 2009 and must be completed no later than **March 15, 2009.**

ALL programs MUST complete the Annual Data Survey every year, even if also completing a Biennial Report.

In response to your feedback and review of regulatory requirements, we have reduced the number of questions on this year’s survey. The survey is NOT used to judge your program’s compliance with the Standards. The

aggregate data from all programs is tracked on an annual basis to meet regulatory and educational requirements. Only aggregate data is reported and no program is identified in the compiled data reports.

The data trends will be reported at the AOTA Conference in Houston and available online at www.acoteonline.org following the conference.

For the second year in a row, the reports are being completed online using a “Zoomerang” survey format.

Remember, the survey includes two pages. At the completion of the first page, make sure you print your responses for your records before hitting the “SUBMIT” button. Do not forget to do the second page and to print a copy before submitting the survey. Please make sure you answer ALL questions and check your responses before submitting. Please do not enter narratives when the instructions request “numbers only”!

Definitions Added to Standards Glossary

At the December meeting, the Council approved the following two additions to the Standards Glossary:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:

a document outlining the terms and details of an agreement between parties, including each

parties' requirements and responsibilities. The memorandum of understanding may be signed by any individual who is authorized by the institution to sign fieldwork memorandums of understanding on behalf of the institution.

CULMINATING

PROJECT: a project that is completed by the doctoral student that demonstrates the student's ability to relate theory to practice and the synthesis of advanced knowledge in a practice area.

"CULMINATING PROJECT: a project that is completed by the doctoral student that demonstrates the student's ability to relate theory to practice and the synthesis of advanced knowledge in a practice area."

Interpretive Guide Change- Faculty Definition

At the December meeting, the Council approved the following change to the interpretive guideline for Doctoral-degree-level and Master's-degree-level Standard A.2.9. The Council removed "lab assistants" from the list of examples provided in the interpretation.

"FULL-TIME FACULTY INCLUDES ALL PERSONS WHO ARE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME BY THE INSTITUTION, WHO ARE APPOINTED PRIMARILY TO THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM, AND WHOSE JOB RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE TEACHING, REGARDLESS OF THE POSITION TITLE (E.G., FULL-TIME INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, ~~LAB ASSISTANTS~~, AND

CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS WOULD BE CONSIDERED FACULTY). REFER TO STANDARD A.2.7 FOR THE ACADEMIC FIELDWORK COORDINATOR'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS."

"FULL-TIME INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, ~~LAB ASSISTANTS~~, AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS WOULD BE CONSIDERED FACULTY"

Faculty with Degrees from Non-Accredited Institutions

At the December meeting, the Council was asked to respond to the following question:

Is a doctoral degree granted by an institution that is not accredited by a recognized national or regional accrediting agency acceptable to meet the doctoral requirements for the program director and faculty?

The Council determined that further information was needed prior to making an informed decision. Legal counsel will be consulted along with a review of policies and procedures followed by other programmatic accrediting agencies.

Staff members were charged to gather data on how many existing

program directors and faculty members currently hold doctoral degrees from institutions that are not accredited by a recognized national or regional accrediting agency.

Interested parties may submit comments to nharvison@aota.org.

"Is a doctoral degree granted by an institution that is not accredited by a recognized national or regional accrediting agency acceptable?"

Number of programs

	<u>Accredited</u>	<u>Developing</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Total</u>
OT				
Masters Programs	142	0	3	145
Doctoral Programs	5	1	0	6
Masters Additional Locations	8	3	0	11
Doctoral Additional Locations	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total OT Locations	155	5	3	163
OTA				
Programs	129	6	19	154
Additional Locations	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>21</u>
Total OTA Locations	138	9	28	175
Totals				
Programs	276	7	22	305
Additional Locations	<u>17</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>33</u>
Total Locations	293	14	31	338
2007	<u>289</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>309</u>
Change	4	9	16	29

¹ Developing Programs have proceeded to the second step and can admit students, but will not gain accreditation until successful completion of a self-study and on-site visit.

² Applicant Programs have submitted a letter of intent to start a new program or additional location.

Interpretive Language added to Standard A.5.5.

At the December meeting, the Council approved the following interpretive language for Doctoral-degree-level, Master’s-degree-level, and OTA Standard A.5.5. The interpretation clarifies the link between Standard A.5.5. and Standard A.5.3.

Standard A.5.5: Programs must routinely and systematically analyze data to determine the extent to which the program is meeting its stated goals and objectives. An annual report summarizing analysis of data and planned action responses must be maintained.

THE INTENT OF STANDARD A.5.5. IS THAT PROGRAMS PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT THAT SUMMARIZES AN ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM IS MEETING ITS STATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AS REQUIRED BY STANDARD A.5.3. (E.G., FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS IN THEIR ASSIGNED TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES; STUDENTS’ PROGRESSION THROUGH THE PROGRAM; FIELDWORK PERFORMANCE; EVALUATION, STUDENT EVALUATION OF FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE; STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM; GRADUATES’ PERFORMANCE ON THE NBCOT CERTIFICATION EXAM; GRADUATES’ JOB PLACEMENT AND PERFORMANCE BASED ON EMPLOYER SATISFACTION).

The December 2008 version of the Standards Interpretive Guide can be found at:

<http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit/StandardsReview/guide/42369.aspx>

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.acoteonline.org

Important dates...

Accreditation Evaluators
Workshop:
February 6–8, 2009

ACOTE Spring 2009 Meeting:
April 25–26, 2009

Resources...

Available at
www.acoteonline.org:

- ACOTE Announcements & Newsletters
- ACOTE Standards
- Interpretive Guides
- ACOTE Manual Policies & Procedures
- ACOTE Forms

Staff contact information

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On-site Visit Schedules

The tentative schedule for the 2009-2010 academic year has 50 on-site visits. This includes 21 initial on-site visits to new programs or additional locations.

At this time there are 67 visits tentatively on the schedule for academic

year 2010-2011. This number could grow as new program applications are received.

The large number of visits to be scheduled places a strain on the volunteer resources available to the Council. As a result, there is very little flexibility in

accommodating requests of all the programs. All attempts will be made to meet your request, but you should be prepared for an on-site visit any time in the academic year you are scheduled.

Most frequently cited Standards at this time!

OTA	Frequency	OT-Master's	Frequency
A.1.5.	2	A.1.5.	3
A.2.1	2		
A.2.2.	7	A2.2.	10
A.2.3	5		
A.2.8.	3		
A.2.16.	1		
A.4.2.	8	A.4.2.	6
A.4.3.	2	A.4.3.	2
A.4.13.	2		
A.5.1.	4	A.5.1.	2
A.5.2.	3	A.5.2.	4
A.5.3.	4	A.5.3.	3
A.5.4.	3	A.5.4.	5
A.5.5.	5	A.5.5.	2
A.6.5.	3		