

Program Director News

Updates from ACOTE and the AOTA Accreditation Department

ACOTE Replaces Biennial Report

Inside:

Ethics Standard	2
FW Standards	2
Form A	3
Distance Education	3
Mission	3
Faculty Credentials	4
Standards Review	4
Program Numbers	5
Pass Rates	5
Probation	6
Adverse Actions	7
Glossary Changes	7

At the summer meeting, ACOTE approved a plan to transition from the Biennial Report format to an interim (mid-term) report format. The change would require some minor modifications to the current annual data report format.

For programs with a 10-year accreditation term, an interim report would be due in year 4 and the self-study would be started in year 9. The on-site visit would occur in year 10.

For programs with a 7-year accreditation term, an interim report would be due in year 3 and the self-study would be started in year 6. The on-site visit would occur in year 7.

For programs with a 5-year accreditation term, an interim report would be due in year 2 and the self-study would be started in year 4. The on-site visit would occur in year 5.

The timeline for the transition from the Biennial Report format to

the interim report format is as follows:

Fall/Winter 2009-2010: ACOTE to complete and approve:

- (1) A revised annual data report format for the 2010 annual report; and
- (2) A new interim report format.

Spring 2010: ACOTE will distribute:

- (1) The new annual data report through an online survey;
- (2) The new interim report requirements including timelines for completion; and
- (3) A schedule of interim report and on-site visit timelines for all academic programs.

Spring 2011: The first interim reports will be due to ACOTE in late spring of 2011 and reviewed at the August 2011 ACOTE meeting.

Note: During the transition year (2010) there will be no biennial or interim reports required by ACOTE.

Modifications to the annual data report will be minimal, but will include additional key outcome measures. For the first time, the data collected through the annual report could be used as a basis for further requests and/or actions by ACOTE. For example, a significant drop in program outcomes over the 12-month period may prompt a request for further information.

The interim report will be used to assess the program's continued compliance with the accreditation Standards. Similar to the Biennial Report format, the interim report will ask programs to provide evidence of continued compliance with key Standards.

For more information, contact Neil at nharvison@aota.org.

Interpretive Guide Change: Ethics Standard

“THE INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WOULD MEET THIS STANDARD.”

In response to feedback from program directors and AOTA staff members, there have been two changes made to the interpretive guideline for Standard A.2.6.

The term “Code of Ethics” was changed to “Ethics Standards” to be consistent with language used in the Association.

The second change was the addition of a sentence that states that “institutional policies and

procedures would meet this Standard”. The changes are highlighted as follows:

Doctoral and Master’s Standard A.2.6. and OTA Standard A.2.8.:

The program must document policies and procedures to ensure that the program director and faculty are aware of and abide by the current code of ethics of the profession of occupational therapy.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS STANDARD MAY BE DOCUMENTED WITH SIGNED STATEMENTS THAT THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND EACH FACULTY MEMBER UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CURRENT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CODE-OF-ETHIC ETHICS STANDARDS. THE PROGRAM MUST ALSO HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ANY ETHICAL VIOLATIONS THAT MAY OCCUR WITH ANY FACULTY MEMBER. THE INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WOULD MEET THIS STANDARD.

Interpretive Guide Changes: Fieldwork Standards

“A RESPONSE FROM FIELDWORK EDUCATORS ABOUT AGREED-UPON FIELDWORK OBJECTIVES IS REQUIRED.”

In response to questions from academic fieldwork coordinators, the following interpretations were added to the fieldwork Standards to clarify the evidence required in order to demonstrate compliance.

Doctoral, Master’s, and OTA Standard B.10.4.:

Ensure that the academic fieldwork coordinator is responsible for advocating the development of links between the fieldwork and didactic aspects of the curriculum, for communicating about the curriculum to fieldwork educators, and for maintaining memoranda of understanding and site data

related to fieldwork placements.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS (E.G., MAILINGS, MEETINGS, E-MAIL, WEB SITE) FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE CURRICULUM CAN BE USED.

A RESPONSE FROM FIELDWORK EDUCATORS IS NOT REQUIRED.

Doctoral, Master’s, and OTA Standard B.10.5.:

Demonstrate that academic and fieldwork educators collaborate in establishing fieldwork objectives, identifying site requirements, and communicating with the student and fieldwork educator about progress and

performance during fieldwork.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS (E.G., MAILINGS, MEETINGS, E-MAIL) FOR COLLABORATING WITH FIELDWORK EDUCATORS ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SITE-SPECIFIC FIELDWORK OBJECTIVES CAN BE USED.

A RESPONSE FROM FIELDWORK EDUCATORS ABOUT AGREED-UPON FIELDWORK OBJECTIVES IS REQUIRED.

Change to FORM A-Fieldwork Sites

In response to a request from a regional fieldwork consortium, ACOTE agreed to the following change to FORM A-Fieldwork Sites.

The revised FORM A no longer requires that the

program list the years of experience for the primary fieldwork educator at each site.

The revised form has been posted to the Web, relevant SharePoint sites, and included in all copies

of the Guide to the Report of Self-Study.

You can download the revised FORM A from the following link...

<http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit/Forms/GeneralUse/FormA.aspx>

"..revised FORM A no longer requires that the program list years of experience for the primary fieldwork educator."

Interpretive Guide Change: Distance Education

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 requires that institutions offering distance or correspondence education establish that the student registered for the course is the student who participates in the course and receives the credit. The following change has been made to the interpretative guide to address this Standard.

Doctoral and Master's Standard A.2.16. and OTA Standard A.2.18.:
Classrooms and laboratories must be

provided that are consistent with the program's educational objectives, teaching methods, number of students, and safety and health standards of the institution, and must allow for efficient operation of the program. If any portion of the program is offered by distance education, technology and resources must be adequate to support a distance-learning environment

IF THE PROGRAM OFFERS DISTANCE EDUCATION OR CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION, IT MUST

INCLUDE A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THE PROGRAM ESTABLISHES THAT THE STUDENT WHO REGISTERS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION OR CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION COURSE OR PROGRAM IS THE SAME STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATES IN AND COMPLETES THE PROGRAM AND RECEIVES THE ACADEMIC CREDIT.

Possible methods include: (1) a secure login and pass code; (2) Proctored exams; and (3) technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

"A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THE PROGRAM ESTABLISHES THAT THE STUDENT WHO REGISTERS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION OR CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION COURSE OR PROGRAM IS THE SAME STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATES IN AND COMPLETES THE PROGRAM AND RECEIVES THE ACADEMIC CREDIT."

Interpretive Guide Change: Mission

In response to new requirements for the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, the following change has been made to the interpretative guide.

Doctoral, Master's, and OTA Standard A.6.4.:
The statement of the mission of the occupational therapy program must be consistent with and supportive of the mission of the sponsoring institution.

THE PROGRAM'S MISSION STATEMENT SHOULD EXPLAIN THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM AND HOW IT HELPS FULFILL OR ADVANCE THE MISSION OF THE SPONSORING INSTITUTION, INCLUDING RELIGIOUS MISSIONS.

Credentials from Non-Accredited Institutions

In the winter 2009 edition of the Program Director News, it was reported that ACOTE was considering 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?

After further consultation with legal counsel and

review of best practices, ACOTE decided at the August meeting that new interpretive language be developed that will require that faculty member's degrees must be from an accredited institution in order to be acceptable to meet the ACOTE Standards.

New interpretive language will be developed for consideration and vote by the council at the December 2009 meeting. ACOTE did receive a

number of queries from existing faculty who hold a degree from a non-accredited institution or are currently enrolled in a degree program at a non-accredited institution.

ACOTE decided that the new requirement will have a 2012 implementation date. Any degree held by a faculty member obtained prior to that date will not be required to meet the interpretation.

“new interpretive language be developed that will require that faculty member's degrees must be from an accredited institution”

Standards Review Timeline

This year, ACOTE will begin the Standards review process for the new Standards. The **projected** timeline is as follows:

Winter 2009-2010:
Selection of the committee members which must include representation from academia and practice as well as all three program levels.

Spring 2010: Committee meets to review: (1) regulatory requirements and changes; and (2) feedback and comments on the current Standards that have been submitted by stakeholders. The committee will develop the first call for comment that

will be distributed to stakeholders.

Fall 2010:
A call for comment is distributed and feedback data collected and analyzed.

Spring/Summer 2011:
First draft of the new Standards is completed and an open hearing conducted at conference.

Fall 2011:
Call for comment and survey on first draft is distributed. Results of the survey are analyzed.

Spring 2012:
Based on feedback gathered on the first draft

Standards, a second draft of the Standards is completed and disseminated if needed. An open hearing is conducted at conference.

Fall 2012:
Revisions to the draft Standards is completed based on the feedback gathered. Ongoing dialogue with stakeholders on targeted Standards if needed.

December 2012:
ACOTE adopts Standards for a July 2014 implementation date.

December 2012:
ACOTE adopts Standards for a July 2014 implementation date”

Number of Programs

	<u>Accredited</u>	<u>Developing</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Total</u>
OT				
Masters Programs	142	3	0	145
Doctoral Programs	5	1	0	6
Masters Additional Locations	8	3	1	12
Doctoral Additional Locations	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total OT Locations	155	8	1	164
OTA				
Programs	130	14	19	163
Additional Locations	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>22</u>
Total OTA Locations	139	26	20	185
Totals				
Programs	277	18	19	314
Additional Locations	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>35</u>
Total Locations	294	34	21	349
2007	<u>289</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>309</u>
Change	5	29	6	40

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.

Policy Changes: Certification Exam Pass Rate Requirements

As reported in the spring PD Newsletter, ACOTE has made the following changes to the policies related to “certification exam pass rate requirements:

ACOTE may cite an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. based on certification exam data reported by NBCOT as part of a regularly scheduled review of a Report of On-Site Evaluation, Biennial Report, Plan of Correction, Progress Report, or other ACOTE report.

In addition, ACOTE receives an annual report on certification exam pass rates of all programs from NBCOT. Upon receipt of this report, ACOTE will request that all programs with a 3-year certification exam pass rate below 70% that are not currently addressing an area of noncompliance with Standard A.5.4. must submit a report to ACOTE related to the low pass rate. The program’s report will be reviewed at the next scheduled ACOTE meeting and an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. may be cited at that time.

In addition, ACOTE may also remove an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. if data provided in NBCOT’s annual report of pass rates indicates that the program’s 3-year pass rate has reached 70% or above. That action will be taken at the next scheduled meeting of ACOTE.

The policy is available at <http://www.aota.org/Educate/Accredit/Policies/Policies.aspx>.

Policy Change: Publication of Probationary Status

In response to changes required in the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, ACOTE approved new formats for publication of programs placed on Probationary Accreditation. The new format includes the reason for the change in status. Examples of the new format are provided below:

Example 1: (Program placed on Probationary Accreditation for Time Limit):

Anywhere College (Next visit: 2010/2011)
(OTA - associate degree)
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
1801 Some Drive
Somewhere, ST 12345
(123) 456-2789
www.webaddress

Status: Probationary Accreditation

(Program placed on Probationary Accreditation effective 8/2/08 for nearing the end of the USDE-mandated time period for returning the program to compliance with 2006 OTA Standard A.2.3. (program director's experience requirements). The program has been requested to submit a Progress Report to ACOTE to document that the cited area of noncompliance has been resolved).

Comments from the program: [Add comments submitted by the program]

Example 2: (Program placed on Probationary Accreditation for number and nature of areas of noncompliance):

Anywhere College (Next visit: 2010/2011)
(OTA - associate degree)
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
1801 Some Drive
Somewhere, ST 12345
(123) 456-2789
www.webaddress

Status: Probationary Accreditation

Link to the following disclosure statement)

(The occupational therapy assistant program at Anywhere College, Somewhere, ST was placed on Probationary Accreditation effective 8/2/08 for failure to comply with 2006 OTA Standards A.2.1. (full-time program director)., A.2.2. (program director qualifications), A.2.3. (program director's experience requirements), A.2.5. (program director responsibilities), and A.2.6. (additional FTE faculty position). The program has been requested to submit a Plan of Correction to return the program to full compliance with the Standards within the USDE-mandated time period for correction).

Comments from the program: [Add comments submitted by the program]

Policy Change: Disclosure Statements for Adverse Actions

In response to changes required in the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, ACOTE approved new formats for publication of disclosure statements for adverse actions. The new format includes the reason for the action. Examples of the new format are provided below:

Example 1: For Denial of Developing Program Status:

The program was denied Developing Program Status for failure to demonstrate the ability to comply with 2006 OTA Standards A.2.2. (program director qualifications), A.2.3. (program director's experience requirements), and B.10.8. (sufficient fieldwork sites).

Comments from the program: [Add comments submitted by the program]

Example 2: For Withholding of Initial Accreditation:

ACOTE withheld initial accreditation for the occupational therapy assistant program at Anywhere College, Somewhere, ST for failure to comply with 2006 OTA Standards A.2.1. (full-time program director), A.2.2. (program director qualifications), A.2.3. (program director's experience requirements), A.2.5. (program director responsibilities), and A.2.6. (additional FTE faculty position). The institution may reapply for initial accreditation by submitting a new Letter of Intent and following the 3-step initial accreditation process.

Comments from the program: [Add comments submitted by the program]

Example 3: For Withdrawal of Accreditation:

ACOTE withdrew accreditation of the occupational therapy assistant program at Anywhere College, Somewhere, ST for failure to comply with 2006 OTA Standards A.2.1. (full-time program director), A.2.2. (program director qualifications), A.2.3. (program director's experience requirements), A.2.5. (program director responsibilities), and A.2.6. (additional FTE faculty position) within the USDE-mandated time period for correction. The institution may reapply for accreditation by submitting a new Letter of Intent and following the 3-step initial accreditation process.

Comments from the program: [Add comments submitted by the program]

Glossary Changes

The following definitions were changed/added to be consistent with the new USDE definitions:

Distance Education: education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include--

- (1) The internet;
- (2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- (3) Audio conferencing; or
- (4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course.

Correspondence Education:

- (1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
- (2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
- (3) Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
- (4) Correspondence education is not distance education.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.acoteonline.org

Important dates...

ACOTE Winter Meeting:
December 4-6, 2009
Savannah, GA

ACOTE Spring Meeting:
May 1-2, 2010
Orlando, FL

Resources...

Available at
www.acoteonline.org:

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

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**Most frequently cited Standards on the 2009
Biennial Report Reviews**

2006 OT Master's-Level Standard:	#	2006 OTA Standard:	#
A.4.2	22	A.4.2	12
A.4.3	4	A.4.3	4
A.5.1	1	A.5.1	4
A.5.2	1	A.5.2	6
A.5.3	5	A.5.3	2
A.5.4	5	A.5.4	4
A.5.5	5	A.5.5	4
A.5.6	0	A.5.6	2

Standard A.4.2: Accurate and current information regarding student outcomes must be readily available to the public in at least one publication or Web page.....

Standard A.4.3: The program's accreditation status and the name, address, and telephone number of ACOTE must be published in all of the following used by the institution: catalog, Web site, and program-related brochures or flyers available to prospective students.

Standard A.5.1: The program must document a current strategic plan that articulates the program's future vision and guides the program development.....

Standard A.5.2: The program director and each faculty member who teach two or more courses must have a current written professional growth and development plan.....

Standard A.5.3: Programs must routinely secure and document sufficient qualitative and quantitative information to allow for meaningful analysis....

Standard A.5.4: The average total pass rate of program graduates taking the national certification exam for the first time over the three most recent calendar years must be 70% or higher.....

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.....