

ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR NEW PROGRAMS

III. B. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) accepts applications from occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant programs located outside the United States. Such programs are invited to submit Letters of Intent to seek ACOTE accreditation, which if granted, would allow its graduates to sit for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification examination upon meeting NBCOT's application requirements. A maximum of four international programs will be reviewed by ACOTE per calendar year. The acceptance of applications for review will be based on the receipt date of the Letter of Intent.

The steps of the accreditation process for international programs are:

- **APPLICATION REVIEW**

For programs that are new or determined by ACOTE to require a more extensive review, the three-step initial accreditation process will be followed. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A.) This process begins with submission of the Application for Developing Program Status. Upon review of that Application, ACOTE either grants, defers action on, or denies Developing Program Status. Although the designation "Developing Program Status" is not a guarantee of accreditation, it does indicate that the resource allocation and plan for development of the proposed program appear to demonstrate the ability to meet the *Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist*, the *Accreditation Standards for a Master's-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist*, or the *Accreditation Standards for an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* if fully implemented as planned. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A.1. for further detail.)

For established programs, the application review step of the initial accreditation process is generally waived by ACOTE. This allows international programs to proceed directly to the initial review process, followed by the initial on-site evaluation.

- **INITIAL REVIEW**

The program director (head of the department) should prepare an initial Report of Self-Study using the *Guide to the Report of Self-Study* provided by AOTA. Five copies of the Report should be prepared and submitted on or before the established deadline.

At its next scheduled meeting, ACOTE takes action to grant, defer action on, or deny a Letter of Review. Granting of a Letter of Review indicates that on the basis of the paper review of the submitted materials, ACOTE has determined that the program is likely to meet the *Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist*, the *Accreditation Standards for a Master's-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist*, or the *Accreditation Standards for an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* if fully implemented in accordance with its plans. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A.2. for further detail.)

- **THE INITIAL ON-SITE EVALUATION**

The initial on-site evaluation (usually 2 to 2½ days in length) is conducted by a team of two evaluators. Based on review of the Evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation, ACOTE will either grant a status of Accreditation

or Accreditation Withheld at its next scheduled meeting. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A.3. for further detail.)

TIMELINE FOR ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS: INITIAL REVIEW PROCESS

The timeline for submission of the Application for Developing Program Status (if required), Initial Report of Self-Study, and subsequent on-site evaluation will be established in collaboration with each program. An established program for which the Application Review step was waived would use the following timeline:

- **ON OR BEFORE ESTABLISHED DUE DATE**

The program director forwards copies of the initial Report of Self-Study to the AOTA Accreditation Department on or before the established due date. All documentation must be submitted in English. The initial review team reviews all materials submitted and presents recommendations to ACOTE for consideration at its next scheduled meeting.

- **PRIOR TO THE ACOTE MEETING**

The reviewers assigned to the initial review team will assess the materials submitted by the program. The program director may be requested to provide additional written information to the review team to clarify or enhance submitted materials. After conducting a complete review of all submitted materials, each reviewer submits a comprehensive evaluation to the review team coordinator. A Composite Report of the Initial Review Team is prepared by the review team coordinator for presentation to ACOTE.

- **AT THE ACOTE MEETING**

At the ACOTE meeting, a subcommittee of ACOTE examines the findings of the initial review team and prepares a motion to grant, defer action on, or deny a Letter of Review.

Following ACOTE action, a letter is forwarded to the chief executive officer of the sponsoring institution, with a copy to the administrator overseeing the program (if applicable) and program director, indicating action taken on the Letter of Review. A Report of Initial Review that lists the strengths of the program and details the possible areas of noncompliance accompanies the letter.

If a Letter of Review is granted, AOTA Accreditation Department staff arranges with the program director an appropriate date for the required on-site evaluation. If action on a Letter of Review is deferred, the program receives, along with the notification of deferral, a list of concerns identified by ACOTE in reaching their decision and a due date for submission of supplementary information that addresses the concerns. If action on a Letter of Review is denied, no further action is taken by ACOTE unless the appropriate institutional official and the program director send a Letter of Intent to proceed with the accreditation process within 30 days of receipt of notification of denial. (If a Letter of Review is deferred or denied, the procedures outlined in ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A.2. are followed.)

- **TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO THE ON-SITE EVALUATION**

In preparation for the on-site evaluation, the program director supplies an update of any information previously provided for initial review. (Details regarding additional materials needed to supplement the initial Report of Self-Study are included in the Report of Initial Review.) The program director will be requested to submit updated materials to the AOTA Accreditation Department at least 2 months prior to the date of the on-site evaluation.

- **ON-SITE EVALUATION**

Two evaluators (members of the ACOTE and/or Roster of Accreditation Evaluators) conduct the 2½-day on-site evaluation. A summary report of the visit is made by the evaluators at the final on-site conference and institution officials are given a copy of the Evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation at that time. To expedite preparation of the report for ACOTE review and action, the program director is requested to submit a copy of the report with any corrections or comments to the AOTA Accreditation Department within 1 week after the on-site evaluation. (Additional response time is available if needed.) A written response to the on-site visit may also be submitted if there are special considerations or circumstances the program director wishes to be brought to the attention of ACOTE. Additional material or documents will not be considered by ACOTE, however. ACOTE will only consider action on the program based on those materials the on-site team had the opportunity to review and discuss during the on-site visit.

- **NEXT SCHEDULED ACOTE MEETING**

At its meeting, ACOTE reviews the Report of On-Site Evaluation and any comments submitted by the program director, makes amendments if necessary, and votes to either grant or withhold accreditation. If accreditation is granted and areas of noncompliance are cited in the final Report of ACOTE, a due date for the required Plan of Correction is established. The program will receive the letter of notification regarding the action of ACOTE within 4 weeks after the meeting.

Programs may appeal an ACOTE decision to withhold accreditation. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section IV.D.)

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FEES

Fees for the initial accreditation of international programs will be charged as follows:

Application Review Fee (If an Application Review is conducted.)	\$ 3,125 <i>(\$ 3,250 effective 7/1/09)</i> <i>(\$ 3,375 effective 7/1/10)</i> <i>(\$ 3,500 effective 7/1/11)</i>
Initial Review Fee	\$ 5,000
On-Site Fee for Initial Accreditation	Actual expenses (travel and per diem for on-site team) plus \$ 1,000
Annual Accreditation Fee (For new programs, the annual fee becomes effective with the first full academic year for which the program has accreditation status.)	\$ 2,900 for 2009/2010 <i>(\$ 3,075 for 2010/2011)</i> <i>(\$ 3,250 for 2011/2012)</i>

All accreditation fees should be made payable to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

- **APPLICATION FEES** (if applicable) should be submitted with the Application for Developing Program Status.
- **INITIAL REVIEW FEES** should be submitted with the initial Report of Self-Study.
- **INITIAL ON-SITE EVALUATION FEES** are billed after the initial on-site evaluation is completed.
- **ANNUAL ACCREDITATION FEES** are billed in June and are due no later than October 15th. If early notification is required to facilitate processing of a purchase order for payment, the AOTA Accreditation Department should be notified. Annual fees are due each year, including the year in which an on-site evaluation

is scheduled. For new programs, the annual fee becomes effective with the first full academic year for which the program has accreditation status.

WITHDRAWAL OF REQUEST FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION

An institution may withdraw its request for initial accreditation of an occupational therapy educational program at any time prior to final action by ACOTE. The request for withdrawal should be in writing and signed by the program director overseeing the program and the chief executive officer of the sponsoring institution and submitted to the ACOTE Chairperson. If the program wishes to reapply for initial accreditation, applicable fees will be assessed.