

GUIDELINES AND POLICY STATEMENTS

VI. L. STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

This statement is adapted from the original white paper titled "Educational Standards: Foundation for the Future" (1998).

QUALITY EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS: A PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE

A profession is distinguished by a variety of factors. Among these are a set of recognized educational standards for professional preparation; a credentialing mechanism for certifying its members; and a degree of autonomy in making decisions which guide its future.

ACOTE, the body selected to ensure the quality of occupational therapy education:

- has established educational standards that are recognized by the US Department of Education (USDE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- has developed a collaborative relationship with the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) to allow graduates of ACOTE accredited programs to become credentialed for practice.
- continues to develop as a decision-making body, accountable to members of the profession and numerous communities of interest.

Through in-depth self-study and analysis and ongoing dialogue with multiple communities of interest, ACOTE has determined that revisions to the standards must be guided by the following imperatives that ensure the quality of the educational programs it accredits. When applying these imperatives, ACOTE must respect and acknowledge the program and host institution's mission and right to autonomy in fulfilling that mission.

The standards must:

1. Require an educational experience with breadth and depth in the liberal arts and science, which includes a focus on globalism and multiculturalism.
2. Respond to the rapidly changing and dynamic nature of contemporary health and human services delivery systems.
3. Require an educational experience that prepares a competent generalist who can practice in a variety of delivery systems and service models where occupational therapy currently exists and where it is emerging as a service.
4. Address the role of occupational therapy in interprofessional collaborative practice and clearly articulate the unique nature of occupational therapy, its professional foundations, intervention approaches and rationales, and expected outcomes using occupation as a therapeutic medium.

5. Prepare practitioners who are effective consumers of the latest research, evidence, and knowledge bases that undergird practice and who contribute to the growth and dissemination of research, evidence, and knowledge.
6. Ensure the integration of fieldwork education into the educational program so that it is implemented and evaluated as a key component of the overall curriculum design.