

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

IV. B. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

ADDITIONAL/CHANGED PROGRAM FORMATS

When an institution having an accredited entry-level occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant educational program makes a decision to add to or change the format of the program, the following review procedures apply:

- Minor Program Changes or Additions
Minor program changes or additions (e.g., curricular adjustments, changes between quarter/semester systems, a move to new facilities within the current administrative unit, etc.) should be submitted with the Biennial Report to ACOTE. There is no separate accreditation action necessary for such changes.
- Significant Program Changes or Additions
Significant program changes or additions require ACOTE review and approval prior to the admission of students into the new/changed program. The following are considered to be significant program changes or additions:
 - The addition of a weekend or evening program
 - The addition of an extended or part-time track
 - The addition of a distance learning track
 - The addition or change to the degree format of the program (e.g., an OTA program transitioning from a certificate to an associate degree, a master's program adding a combined baccalaureate/master's degree, etc.)

Programs must submit a letter to ACOTE, c/o the AOTA Accreditation Department, that requests approval for the new/changed program. The letter must be signed by the program director and the administrator to whom the program director reports and must include the following information:

- the proposed addition or change;
- the requirements for institutional/state approval of the addition or change and the status of that approval;
- the month/year the proposed addition or change would occur;
- the accommodations to support the addition/change, including implications for 1) faculty, mentors, or other support staff composition, 2) resources, 3) budget, 4) curriculum design, 5) admission information and criteria, 6) course sequence, 7) course content, and 8) fieldwork.

Upon review of the submitted information by ACOTE, the program will be notified whether the accreditation status of the existing program will accrue to the addition or change or if additional information is required. The accreditation status of the existing program will not accrue to the additional/changed program until ACOTE accreditation review procedures are successfully completed.

DETERMINATION OF A MINOR CHANGE OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

If it is not clear whether the new program offering should be defined as a minor change or a significant change, the program must submit a letter to the ACOTE Chairperson, c/o the AOTA Accreditation Department, that requests clarification. The letter must be signed by the program director and the administrator to whom the program director reports and must include information about the proposed addition or change, the requirements for institutional/state approval of the addition or change, and the status of that approval. That information will be reviewed by the ACOTE Executive Committee and a determination of the applicable policy will be made.

ADDITIONAL/CHANGED OT PROGRAM DEGREE LEVEL

An institution with an accredited master's-level occupational therapy program that is planning to add or change to a higher degree level, such as an occupational therapy master's program adding a doctoral-level occupational therapy program (e.g., OTD), must apply for separate accreditation for the doctoral-level program. Because doctoral-level occupational therapy programs are subject to a different set of ACOTE Accreditation Standards, the initial accreditation process described in ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section III.A. must be followed. The institution may not admit students into the new doctoral-level occupational therapy program until Developing Program Status has been obtained.

ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Programs that are planning an additional location (e.g., satellite location) must follow an abbreviated accreditation procedure for the new location. ACOTE review and acceptance of the Application for Accreditation of an Additional/Changed Location is required prior to the admission of students into the additional location. The accreditation status of the existing program does not accrue to the additional location until the procedures for accreditation of an additional location are successfully completed.

Programs are limited to 4 additional locations under the accreditation status of a primary location. This policy was implemented to ensure the quality of the education provided at each accredited location under the direction and leadership of one program director. Programs seeking accreditation for more than 4 additional locations must identify a new primary location and apply as a new applicant program through the 3-step initial accreditation process.

DEFINITION OF AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION

An additional location is defined as a facility that is geographically separated from the primary location that offers a significant didactic portion of the educational program (excluding fieldwork) on a face-to-face basis. All additional locations must meet the following criteria:

1. Students from the additional location must graduate with a degree from the primary location's institution.
2. The program director from the primary location must be responsible for the administration of the program in conjunction with the site coordinator at the additional location.
3. The additional location must have the same mission, philosophy, and curriculum design as the primary location.

LETTER OF INTENT FOR ADDITIONAL LOCATION

Programs seeking accreditation for an additional location should submit a Letter of Intent to the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®), c/o the AOTA Accreditation Department, at least 12 months prior to the time the first group of students are projected to enter the program. (NOTE: It is imperative that the evaluation process be completed prior to the graduation of the first class of students.) The letter must be signed by the chief executive officer and by the occupational therapy program director. The Letter of Intent must include a description of the additional location, the month and year occupational therapy students are projected to enter the program at the new location, the months and year the first class is projected to be on Level II fieldwork, and the month and year the first class is projected to graduate.

Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent, AOTA Accreditation staff will forward the "Application for Accreditation of an Additional Location" and a timetable for the accreditation process.

A *tentative* on-site evaluation date is established, based on the projected graduation date of the first class to complete the program at the additional location. An on-site evaluation may not be required; however, this decision is made by ACOTE after review of the application and accompanying documentation. ACOTE may decide to waive the on-site evaluation of the new location if it meets all of the following criteria:

- The application materials provide adequate information upon which to assess the additional location's compliance with the *ACOTE Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, a Master's-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, or an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant*.
- The main program/campus has no outstanding areas of noncompliance.
- The date of the next regularly scheduled on-site evaluation is near enough to encompass evaluation of the additional location.

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION

The Application for Accreditation of an Additional Location and the instructions regarding required documentation are provided for reference in ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section VII.H. A full Report of Self-Study is generally not required. The application is provided as a guide to indicate areas in which information is required; however, each Standard should be reviewed to determine whether there are any changes from the currently accredited program. An explanation of the changes and the resulting impact on the program should be included in the application.

The program director will be notified by AOTA Accreditation staff of the names and addresses of those to whom the completed application materials are to be mailed. Three copies of the materials are generally required initially. Two additional copies are requested if ACOTE determines that an on-site evaluation is required. The new additional location application fee (per location) should accompany the application. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section V.A.)

Upon receipt of the application, the two assigned ACOTE reviewers (usually the same reviewers assigned to the existing program) complete a paper review of the application and report their findings to ACOTE at its next scheduled meeting.

ACOTE ACTION ON THE APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION OF AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION

At its next scheduled meeting, ACOTE may take any one of the following actions:

- Grant Developing Status to the additional location and proceed with either a full-scale on-site evaluation or a modified on-site evaluation (e.g., decrease the time involved or the number of on-site team members). The program may proceed with plans to admit students into the program at the additional location according to the approved timeline. Although the designation "Developing 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 *ACOTE Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, a Master's-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, or an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* if fully implemented as planned. Developing Status **must** be granted before students may be admitted or notified of admission to the program.
- Defer action on the application and request that additional information be submitted. (The tentative on-site evaluation of the additional location may need to be postponed or cancelled).
- Deny Developing Status to the additional location. If Developing Program Status is denied, the program will not be able to admit students into the additional location and will not be eligible to proceed with accreditation process. The program may reapply for Developing Status for the additional location by submitting a new Letter of Intent and starting the initial accreditation process again.

ACCREDITATION FEES FOR AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION

An application for accreditation of a new location must be accompanied by the new additional location application fee. (See ACOTE Accreditation Manual Section V.A.) If an on-site evaluation is required, an initial on-site fee will also be charged.

An annual additional location fee becomes effective with the first full academic year for which the program has accreditation status. The fee will be included with the annual accreditation fee invoice of the main campus program.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES REQUIRING SEPARATE ACCREDITATION ACTION

In any of the following situations, programs must apply for separate accreditation through the initial accreditation process described in Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) Accreditation Manual Section III.A.:

1. The degree-granting institution is not the same as that of the currently accredited program.
2. An institution with an accredited occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program seeks to add a new degree level that is subject to a different set of ACOTE Accreditation Standards.
3. The proposed additional location has a different mission, philosophy, or curriculum design than the currently accredited program.
4. The institution already has 4 additional locations included in the accreditation status of the primary location.