

# PD Newsletter

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION

Summer 2016

## From the Director of Accreditation:

As we head into summer, I wanted to provide you with some accreditation updates. This has been an eventful year with lots of changes. One of ACOTE's major decisions was made at the August 2015 meeting, where ACOTE voted to maintain two entry levels for the OT and to add the baccalaureate degree level for the OTA while maintaining the associates degree level. The Educational Standards Review Committee held its first meeting in May 2016 to begin writing the next set of Standards and a Post-Professional Recognition Committee was formed to address post-professional OTD degrees.

ACOTE continues to see unprecedented growth in all programs, especially at the OTD and OTA levels. Over the past 8 years, there has been a 560% increase in OTD programs, from 5 in 2007 to 33 in 2015. (This number includes accredited programs and those in the Applicant or Candidacy phases). Among OTA programs, we have seen a 96% growth over the same time span moving from 128 to 251 programs (either accredited or in the Applicant or Candidacy phases). Overall, ACOTE is working with 499 programs at various stages in the accreditation process. If you missed the accreditation updates presentation at the 2016 AOTA conference, [you can check out the slides here](#). To keep up with this growth, ACOTE is adding two additional seats to the Council to now include a total of 24 members (10 educators, 10 practitioners, 3 public members, and 1 higher education administrator). At the August 2016 ACOTE meeting, we will induct 6 new members to the Council.

We have also had some recent staffing changes. Sheba Muluneh has joined the AOTA staff on a temporary basis while Angelica Grigsby is on extended leave until mid-August. Aleisha LaChette has taken over Angelica's Program Manager responsibilities and Sheba is serving as the On-Site Program Coordinator. We are very happy to have Sheba on staff! If you have any questions about an on-site, make sure to email Sheba at [smuluneh@aota.org](mailto:smuluneh@aota.org). Welcome, Sheba!

As you review this edition of the PD Newsletter, you will find important policy and ACOTE Standard interpretation changes, specific updates on the Educational Standards Review Committee, and ACOTE actions taken at the April 2016 meeting.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of occupational therapy education.

*Heather Stagliano, DHSc, OTR*  
Director of Accreditation

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## Educational Standards Review Committee (ESRC)

The Educational Standards Review Committee (ESRC) held its first in-person meeting May 20-21, 2016 in Bethesda, Maryland, to begin the process of writing the new accreditation standards for the OT (doctoral and master's degree level) and the OTA (baccalaureate and associate's degree level). At this meeting, the committee reviewed all correspondence received; the data and stakeholder feedback from the Call for Comment survey; and identified standards to revise, add, or delete. The committee does not anticipate having the new standards finalized and approved by ACOTE until December 2017 (or possibly August 2018 if ACOTE does not approve the Standards in 2017) with an implementation date of mid-2019 or 2020. Programs will be able to submit applications for baccalaureate OTA programs once the standards are adopted by ACOTE, and then will have 18 months to implement the new set of standards. The next meeting of the ESRC will take place September 23-24, 2016, in Bethesda, Maryland, where the committee will write Draft I revisions to the Standards and develop a survey on Draft I revisions. A report of the committee's actions will take place at the Academic Leadership Council meeting in San Diego in October.

## Policy Updates

Policy changes for [ACOTE Policy III.A.1. Step One: The Application Review](#) and [ACOTE Policy VI.B. Policy on Confidentiality and Disclosure](#): Within these policies, it was clarified that ACOTE forwards a copy of all Letters of Intent and Letter of Intent Data Forms to state occupational therapy associations to inform them of new applicant educational programs in their state. The disclosure policy also now indicates that ACOTE decisions to deny Preaccreditation Status are made public. Although this action is not considered an adverse action and is not appealable (because the program may elect to proceed with the initial on-site evaluation), it is important for the public to have the reasons for the denial available to them. Additional changes to the Step One policy included clarification that Applicant programs may advertise, but must be very clear that there is no guarantee that the program will receive Candidacy Status or be allowed to admit students. The policy also states that once Candidacy Status has been granted, requests to expand or significantly change the program (e.g., admit an additional student cohort, increase the number of students to be accepted each year by 25% or more, offer the program at an additional location by distance education, add a weekend, evening, or part-time track, etc.) require advance approval from ACOTE.

## Interpretive Updates

Interpretation for Standard A.6.9: *Level II fieldwork syllabi may not be used to document compliance with a Section B content standard.*

Interpretation for Standard C.1.6: *A signed memorandum of understanding must be in effect from initiation to conclusion of the fieldwork experience.*

Interpretive language added for Standard C.1.7: *To meet this standard, students must participate in a fieldwork rotation that is created explicitly/specifically for the purpose of meeting objectives addressing psychological and social factors. Collaboration with the fieldwork educator must indicate that the setting is aware of and supportive of this focus. An assignment or objective alone is not sufficient for compliance.*

The most up-to-date ACOTE Standards and Interpretive Guide can be found here: [2011 ACOTE Standards and Interpretive Guide](#). Please remember to use the most recent Standards and Interpretive Guide as the interpretations, found in the grayed areas of the document, can and do change. The current document is the **April 2016** Interpretive Guide Version.

## AOTA's NBCOT Exam Prep

AOTA's online NBCOT® Exam Prep program is the most comprehensive and effective way for new occupational therapy practitioners to get ready for the biggest test of their career—at their own pace, any time and any place. Developed and reviewed by top occupational therapy leaders and educators across all practice areas, Exam Prep includes hundreds of self-assessment questions and vital tools to help students and new graduates focus on the topics they'll need to master. Subscriptions include access for 1 year from the date of purchase. For more information and to order, visit: [AOTA's NBCOT Exam Prep](#).

## Program Website Update

Over the past year, ACOTE announced that a review of program websites would take place after it was noted that many programs were noncompliant with the required website information.

Beginning in February 2016, two rounds of reviews were performed of all program websites for compliance with Standards A.4.2 and A.4.3. At its April 2016 meeting, ACOTE found nearly half of all accredited programs noncompliant with one or both Standards (164 programs). If your program was cited, please refer to the information sheet provided with the action letter on how to ensure compliance with these standards.

### **eAccreditation Notes**

Please remember that all program director changes must be submitted through the substantive change tab within the eAccreditation system.

## New ACOTE Members

### **Teresa Leibforth Dufeny, PhD, NCC, OTR/L**

Clinical Coordinator of OT  
All Children's Hospital  
St. Petersburg, FL

### **Cynthia DH Fuchs, OTR/L**

Assistant Professor  
New England Institute of Technology  
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program  
East Greenwich, RI

### **Lynn Kilburg, DHSc, MBA, OTR/L**

Professor and Director, Occupational Therapy Program  
St. Ambrose University  
Davenport, IA

### **Vanna Lombardi-Gillies, MHA, OTR/L**

Rehabilitation Director  
Harrison Medical Center  
Bremerton, WA

### **Debra Susan Ouellette, MS, OTR/L, SCLV**

Senior Occupational Therapist/Lead IV  
Casa Colina Rehabilitation and Centers for Healthcare  
Pomona, CA

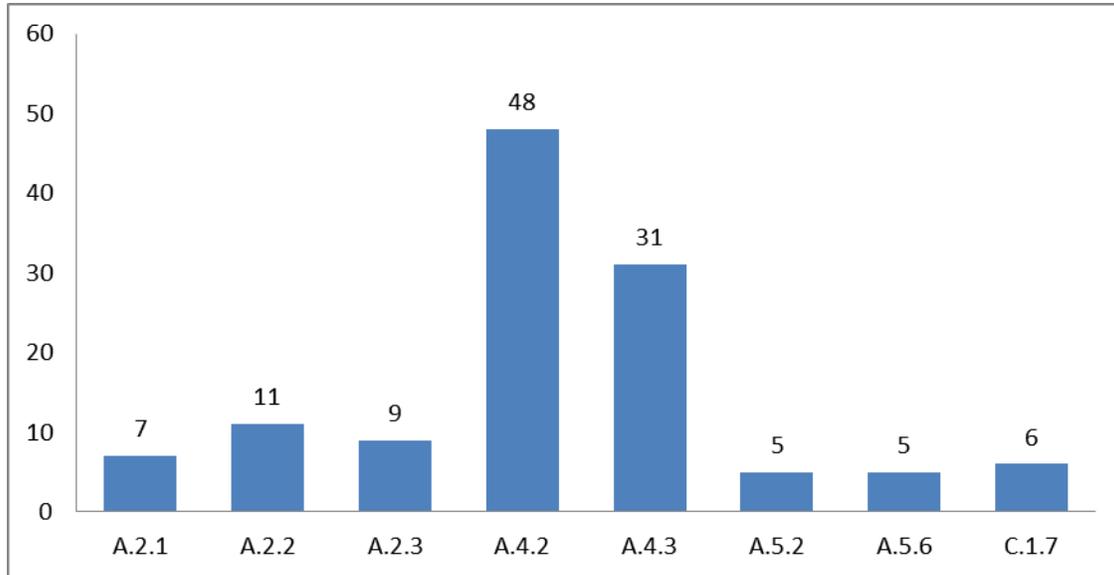
### **Dee Stanfield, OTD, MHE, OTR/L**

Early Intervention and School-Based Occupational Therapist  
Babies Can't Wait  
Macon, GA

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## Most Frequently Cited AONs April 2016



## Program Numbers

As of May 31, 2016, the number of program locations accredited or in the accreditation process totaled 499.

Program Status	OT Doctoral	OT Master's	OTA	TOTAL
Accredited Programs NOTE: 9 OTM programs are transitioning to the OTD.	11	156	211	378
Accredited Additional Locations	0	10	15	25
Candidate Programs	12	17	21	50
Developing Additional Locations	0	1	1	2
Applicant Programs	11	10	23	44
Applicant Additional Locations	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>499</b>

## April 2016 ACOTE Meeting Actions

At the April 2016 ACOTE meeting, ACOTE took action on 524 program reports including the following:

- Initial Accreditation: Ten (10) programs were granted initial accreditation for 5 years; 3 programs were granted initial accreditation for 7 years.
- Reaccreditation: Five (5) programs were reaccredited for 10 years; 12 programs were reaccredited for 7 years.
- Candidacy Applications: Seven (7) programs were granted Candidacy Status; one program's Candidacy Status decision was deferred.
- Preaccreditation Status: Eight (8) programs were granted Preaccreditation Status; one program's Preaccreditation Status decision was deferred.

A full report on ACOTE actions is available online at [April and May 2016 ACOTE Actions](#).

## Change of Submission Dates for Candidacy Applications and Initial Reports of Self-Study

At its May 2016 meeting, ACOTE voted to change the standard submission dates for Candidacy Applications and initial Reports of Self-Study so they are submitted a month earlier. This will allow for additional review time for the review teams as well as more time for program directors to respond to requests for additional information (re-opened Standards).

Staff will be working with program directors individually to revise any affected initial accreditation timelines. The revised policies appear on the ACOTE website as follows:

[ACOTE Policy III.A. Overview of the Initial Accreditation Process](#)

[ACOTE Policy III.A.1. Step One: The Application Review](#)

Questions may be referred to Sue Graves ([sgraves@aota.org](mailto:sgraves@aota.org))

Letter of Intent and Deposit Due	
Change from	To:
December 1	November 1
April 1	March 1
August 1	July 1

Candidacy Application Submission Dates	
Change from	To:
January 15	December 15
May 15	April 15
September 15	August 15

Initial Report of Self-Study Submission Dates	
Change from	To:
December 1	November 1
April 1	March 1
August 1	July 1



**OTCAS**  
The Centralized Application Service  
for Occupational Therapy

To simplify the application process for prospective occupational therapy students and to facilitate the admissions process for OT programs, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is offering the Occupational Therapy Centralized Application Service (OTCAS).

**BENEFITS TO OTCAS PROGRAMS**

- Gives OT programs exposure to a broader national spectrum of applicants
- Enables targeted messaging to applicants through innovative communications tools
- Provides online access to rich applicant data including GPAs, test scores, demographic information, and other academic criteria to conduct analyses to make better admissions decisions
- Supports automatic ranking and scoring of applicants based on customizable criteria
- Frees staff from resource-intensive administrative tasks

**BENEFITS TO OTCAS APPLICANTS**

- Delivers an exceptional applicant experience with an intuitive, online application and applicant support to answer questions quickly
- Enables prospective students to apply to multiple programs using a single online application
- Lets applicants check the status of their applications in real time

**WANT TO LEARN MORE?**  
<http://info.liaison-intl.com/otcas>



## AOTA Staff Contacts

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**Angelica Grigsby**  
Accreditation Program Manager  
*On leave until mid-August*