Revision of the ACOTE Educational Standards

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) has begun the process of review and revision of the current accreditation Standards, the 2011 Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, Accreditation Standards for a Master’s-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, and Accreditation Standards for an Associate-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant. The revised accreditation Standards will include requirements for a baccalaureate-degree-level educational program for the occupational therapy assistant. These Standards establish the critical competencies necessary to prepare individuals to become entry-level occupational therapists (OTs) or occupational therapy assistants (OTAs). The Standards review process begins every 5 years to ensure that they remain current and effective.

The comprehensive review process used by ACOTE is designed to ensure participation by the broadest possible constituency. The process began with establishment of a new ACOTE Educational Standards Review Committee (ESRC) consisting of the following members:

- Beth Ann Hatkevich, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; ESRC chairperson
- Teresa L. Brininger, PhD, OTR/L, CHT (OT practice)
- Patricia Coker-Bolt, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (master’s-degree-level program faculty)
- Rebecca Cunningham, MA (student)
- Laura Deary, COTA/L (OTA practice)
- Kate DeCleene Huber, OTD, MS, OTR (National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy [NBCOT] observer)
- Stephanie Kokesh, OTD, OTR/L (associate’s-degree-level program faculty)
- Rebecca Ozelie, DHS, OTR/L, BCPR (fieldwork education)
- Sabrina Salvant, EdD, MPH, OTR/L (doctoral-degree-level program faculty)
- Barbara Schwartz-Bechet, EdD, (academic administrator)
- Susan Zlotlow, PhD (consumer)

Dr. Heather Stagliano, Director of Accreditation, is serving as the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) staff liaison to the committee.

Effective standards emerge from the collective wisdom of the constituencies affected by the accreditation process. In spring 2016, a Call for Comment was sent to constituent groups, including all bodies within the AOTA organizational structure; the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, the American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee, and NBCOT; OT and OTA educational program representatives (CEOs, deans, program directors, fieldwork coordinators); regulators (licensure boards, accreditors); students; and the public at large. An open hearing for comment will also be held at the joint Academic Leadership Council and Academic Fieldwork Coordinators meeting (October 2016), the AOTA Annual Conference in Philadelphia (2017), the Academic Leadership Council meeting (October 2017) and if needed, at the AOTA Annual Conference in Salt Lake City (2018).

The process for review and revision is expected to take 2 years. During the first year (2016) the constituent groups’ input will be analyzed and draft standards written. During the second year (2017) constituent groups will be asked for comment on the draft Standards. It is anticipated that the new Standards will be adopted in December 2017 and compliance will be required by July 2019.

Questions or comments may be directed by email to the ESRC, c/o the AOTA Accreditation Department at accred@aota.org (subject line: “Standards Review”).