

# CONTINUING ACCREDITATION

## IV. B. 2. ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

### ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Programs proposing an additional location must follow the accreditation process for an additional location outlined below. 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.

### DEFINITION

**Additional Location:** A location that is geographically apart from the main campus, where instruction occurs, and it is possible for students to complete 50% or more of the didactic coursework (including laboratory experiences) in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential (the 50% does not include Level II fieldwork or doctoral experiential component).

### Additional Requirements

- The additional location has the same programmatic mission, vision, philosophy, curriculum design, strategic plan, and course objectives as the accredited primary location.
- The additional location demonstrates the same institutional sponsorship and governance as the accredited primary program.
- The degree is granted by the institution housing the ACOTE-accredited program (the primary location).
- The program director is responsible for the management and administration of the additional site as required by the ACOTE Standards including planning, evaluation, budgeting, selection of faculty and staff, maintenance of accreditation and commitment to strategies for professional development.
- There is a site coordinator on site at the additional location who meets the requirements of the ACOTE Standards.
- The faculty at the additional location are faculty of the ACOTE-accredited program and must report to the program director.
- Faculty, resources, and operational policies (e.g., admissions, budget, etc.) are shared. Programs that are self-contained with separate faculty, admissions, facilities, etc., that teach an identical curriculum are considered separate programs and must apply for independent accreditation for the program per the accreditation process for new programs. (See [ACOTE Policy III.A. Overview of the Initial Accreditation Process](#)).

### Criteria for an Additional Location

- Additional locations may only be established at ACOTE-accredited programs holding no areas of noncompliance. Applicant or candidate programs are not eligible to submit a Candidacy Application for an Additional Location.
- The program must provide evidence of all necessary approvals to offer the additional location from the institution, the educational licensing and/or governing board(s) of the state(s) in which the program is to be offered, and the institutional accrediting body. In cases where no approval is needed, statements to that effect from the relevant body are required.
- The site coordinator must be hired and physically located at the additional location prior to the start of coursework by the first class of students who have been accepted into the occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program.

### ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Due to the wide variations of additional location models, a multi-step approval and application process will be

utilized as outlined below. Candidacy Status **must** be granted before students may be admitted or notified of admission to the program.

## **STEP 1: INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

Accredited programs seeking accreditation for an additional location must upload an initial proposal through ACOTE Online (<https://acote.aota.org>) using the “Substantive Change” tab at least 12 months prior to the time the first group of students are projected to enter the program. The evaluation process be completed prior to the graduation of the first class of students.

The initial proposal must be signed by the chief executive officer of the institution and by the occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program director and include the following information:

- A brief description of the proposed additional location, the planned arrangement, and the anticipated effect(s) on each program/institution.
- Timeline information including the month and year students are projected to enter the program at the new location, the month and year the first class is projected to begin Level II fieldwork, the month and year the first class is projected to begin the doctoral capstone experience (OTD only), and the month and year the first class is projected to graduate.
- Documentation that the program meets the following requirements:
  - The program director of the primary location is responsible for the administration and operation of all locations offered by the accredited program.
  - The additional location has the same programmatic mission, vision, philosophy, curriculum design, strategic plan, and course objectives as the primary location.
  - The primary location that is applying for accreditation of a new location is an ACOTE-accredited program holding no areas of noncompliance (applicant or developing programs are not eligible to submit a Candidacy Application for an Additional Location).
  - The new location demonstrates the same institutional sponsorship and governance as the accredited program.
  - Students from the additional location will graduate with a degree awarded from the accredited program’s sponsoring institution.
  - Evidence is provided that the primary location has obtained all necessary approvals to offer the new location.
  - The site coordinator will be hired and physically located at the additional location prior to the start of coursework by the first class of students
  - The faculty at the additional location are faculty of the primary location and will report to the program director of the primary location.

Upon receipt of the initial proposal for an additional location, Accreditation staff will review the proposal. If the initial proposal meets the criteria, the program will be provided with a timeline and report due dates. If the initial proposal does not meet the criteria, the program will be informed of the available options.

## **STEP 2: CANDIDACY APPLICATION FOR AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

The program director will be notified by Accreditation staff of the process for submitting a Candidacy Application through ACOTE Online (<https://acote.aota.org>).

Upon receipt of the Candidacy Application, the two assigned ACOTE reviewers will complete a paper review of the application and report their findings to ACOTE at its next scheduled meeting. At that meeting, ACOTE may take any one of the following actions:

- Grant Candidacy Status to the additional location and proceed with a full on-site evaluation of all existing locations and the new additional location. The program may proceed with plans to admit students into the program at the additional location according to the approved timeline. Although the designation “Candidacy Status” is not a guarantee of accreditation, it does indicate that the resource allocation and plans for development of the proposed program appear to demonstrate the ability to meet the applicable ACOTE

Accreditation Standards if fully implemented as planned. Candidacy 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 for consideration at a subsequent ACOTE meeting. 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. The supplementary information will be reviewed at the next meeting of ACOTE at which time a decision regarding Candidacy Status will be made. A program may have action on the Candidacy Application for an Additional Location deferred a maximum of two times. The tentative on-site evaluation of the additional location may need to be postponed or cancelled.
- Deny Candidacy Status to the additional location. If Candidacy 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 Candidacy Status for the additional location by submitting a new proposal (ACOTE may consider an expedited review).

### **STEP 3: REPORT OF SELF-STUDY AND ON-SITE EVALUATION AN ACCREDITATION ACTION**

If ACOTE grants Candidacy Status, Accreditation staff will establish the date of the on-site evaluation visit based on the projected graduation date of the first class. The on-site evaluation visit will include all existing locations and the additional location and accreditation action will be in accordance with [ACOTE Policy IV.A.2. The On-site Evaluation](#).

### **ACCREDITATION FEES FOR AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

A Candidacy Application for an Additional Location must be accompanied by the new additional location application fee (See [ACOTE Policy V.A. Fees](#)). An initial on-site fee for only the additional location will be charged.

### **ACCREDITED PROGRAMS TRANSITIONING TO AN ADDITIONAL LOCATION**

Accredited programs of occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant programs that are seeking to transition from independent accreditation to an additional location must submit a request for approval of a significant change through the ACOTE eAccreditation Portal (<https://acote.aota.org>) using the “Substantive Change” tab. Significant changes require ACOTE review and approval prior to the admission of students into the changed program. The significant change request must include the following:

- A brief description of the proposed additional location, the planned arrangement, and the anticipated effect(s) on each program/institution.
- Timeline information including the month and year students are projected to enter the program at the new location, the month and year the first class is projected to begin Level II fieldwork, the month and year the first class is projected to begin the doctoral capstone experience (OTD only), and the month and year the first class is projected to graduate.
- Documentation that the program meets the following requirements:
  - The program director of the primary location is responsible for the administration and operation of all locations offered by the accredited program.
  - The additional location has the same programmatic mission, vision, philosophy, curriculum design, strategic plan, and course objectives as the primary location.
  - The new location demonstrates the same institutional sponsorship and governance as the accredited program.
  - Students from the additional location will graduate with a degree awarded from the accredited program’s sponsoring institution.
  - Evidence is provided that the primary location has obtained all necessary approvals to offer the new location.

- The site coordinator will be hired and physically located at the additional location prior to the start of coursework by the first class of students
- The faculty at the additional location are faculty of the primary location and will report to the program director of the primary location.
- The accommodation to support the changes including implications for 1) faculty, mentors, or other support staff composition, 2) resources and space, 3) budget, 4) curriculum design, 5) admission information and criteria, 6) course sequence, 7) course content, and 8) fieldwork.