

# ACOTE PROCEDURES FOR ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

*The following are detailed procedures for program directors to follow when preparing for an on-site evaluation.*

Program directors should send the following information to the evaluators with a copy to the AOTA Accreditation Department ([accred@aota.org](mailto:accred@aota.org)) **at least 3 months prior to the on-site date** so that appropriate travel arrangements can be made.

## **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

- Closest/best airport for the team members to fly into and specific directions from the airport to the hotel (to be arranged by the program director as noted below) and directions from the hotel to the school. Please include a map.
- Information regarding public transportation, shuttle, taxi, or ride service between the airport and hotel.
- Specific directions, room number, and/or map to the location of the meeting with the program director on the first morning of the on-site.
- If it is advisable for the team to rent a car, please notify the team chairperson.
- Please include information regarding access to off-campus restaurants.

The on-site team will make their own flight/travel arrangements, and the team chairperson will notify program directors of the travel schedules after they are arranged.

## **HOTEL RESERVATIONS**

Room reservations should be made for the **Team Chair and Co-Evaluator** only. Confirmation of reservations and the name, address, and telephone number of the hotel should be sent to the Team Chair, Co-Evaluator, and to AOTA accreditation department using the [Hotel Information Form](#) located on the ACOTE website.

Reservations should be made for a **minimum of three (3) nights**, commencing the day before the on-site evaluation is scheduled to begin. The on-site team may request an additional night depending on travel arrangements. When selecting a hotel for the on-site team, select one that is moderately priced, but safe, clean, and comfortable. Please consider the following factors:

- Complimentary breakfast or restaurant services that are open early morning and late evening. Restaurants located within a safe walking distance (1-2 blocks) from the hotel.
- Because the team prepares the Report of On-Site Evaluation at the hotel, please be sure that the hotel room is equipped with a table, desk, or work area that will accommodate two persons.
- Proximity to your institution. Please inform the team chairperson of the time needed to travel between the hotel and the institution.
- Bed and Breakfast accommodations are generally not recommended.
- Access to hotel shuttle, if available.
- Availability of ironing board, hair dryer, exercise or swimming facilities, and Internet access.

Upon arrival the evaluators will replace the institution's credit card with an alternate payment method. **INSTITUTIONS/PROGRAMS SHOULD NOT PAY FOR ROOMS.**

## **SCHEDULE FOR ON-SITE EVALUATION**

A tentative on-site schedule should be prepared no later than 60 days prior to the on-site visit due to the many priorities of all involved. Because the evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation will include a list of individuals interviewed, please complete the [ACOTE On-site Participants Template](#) and add the completed template as an attachment to the on-site schedule. This template includes the participants' full names, credentials, and titles (if appropriate). Additionally, the fieldwork educators should include the facility in which they work. This will expedite the preparation of the final report.

When you talk with the individuals with whom the on-site team will meet, please stress the importance of their participation in the interviews as part of the on-site evaluation, explain the need for the team to begin and end interviews promptly as scheduled, and encourage all participants, particularly administrative officials, to attend the exit conference.

Prior to exit conference, time is allotted for informal consultation with the program and may include any individual at the program director's discretion. Consultation must take place **after** the ROSE has been completed and presented to the program director.

Please ensure that you upload your tentative schedule and list of on-site participants in the ACOTE Online (<https://acote.aota.org/login>) Self-Study Home tab at least one month prior to the on-site evaluation. Contact the on-site evaluation team chairperson to finalize the schedule prior to confirming appointments since the team chairperson may wish to make adjustments to the schedule.

### **TELEPHONE CONTACTS**

In addition to the hotel telephone number, team members and AOTA accreditation department should be provided with a telephone number at the institution where the team can be reached in case of emergency. The team and AOTA accreditation department ([accred@aota.org](mailto:accred@aota.org)) should also receive program and emergency contact numbers for urgent or last-minute matters.

### **GIFTS/SOCIAL INVITATIONS**

In order to avoid any perception of conflict of interest, on-site evaluators are not allowed to accept gifts or social invitations in conjunction with the accreditation process. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### **FEES**

On-site evaluation fees are reviewed within ACOTE Policy V.A. Fees, available on <https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/policies/>. *The host school does **not** pay for any of the costs incurred at the time of the on-site accreditation visit.*

### **MATERIAL FOR REVIEW ON-SITE**

The following materials should be available on-site for review by the evaluation team:

1. All signed fieldwork (and capstone if applicable) written agreements and fieldwork information.
2. Sample forms used in the student selection process.
3. Student records.
4. Course materials organized in one place that includes syllabi, assignment instructions, exams, and quizzes. Samples of student work such as papers, completed exams, and assignments may also be provided at the request of the on-site team.
5. Materials such as exams and fieldwork evaluation forms that are used to evaluate and document students' progress.
6. Any forms and reports used as part of program evaluation, such as students' evaluations of courses, fieldwork analysis of graduates, graduate and employer surveys, faculty evaluations, etc.

The on-site team may request the opportunity to review course materials as well as other non-confidential materials at the hotel the day prior to the on-site evaluation.

### **MEETING ROOM**

It is extremely helpful to have a secure room assigned to the team. Arrangements should be made for all interviews and conferences to be held there, with the exception of those with the president and/or dean. In this way, time is not lost in moving about. This room should be equipped with adequate lighting, a large table, chairs, a telephone, and light refreshments. If remote interviews are scheduled as part of the on-site, please ensure that the necessary equipment and IT support are available and that any codes, passwords, or special dial features are made known to the team. The room should also allow for wireless internet access.

### **LUNCH**

Please let the team chairperson know what options are available to obtain a quick, light lunch. Most teams opt for a working lunch, either having something delivered or walking to an on-campus location. Please note that the team expects to pay for their meals. Also note that the team is unable to eat with faculty, administrators, or other institution representatives during this time.

### **EXIT CONFERENCE**

The on-site team will present its findings with respect to strengths, suggestions, and areas of noncompliance at the exit conference on the last day of the on-site evaluation. The exit conference normally takes 10-20 minutes.

The program director must review the report and comment on any factual correction as applicable. In addition, program directors may submit a Letter of Comment if there are special considerations or circumstances they wish to be brought to the attention of ACOTE. Additional material or documents will not be considered by ACOTE. ACOTE will only consider action on the program based on materials the on-site team had the opportunity to review and discuss during the on-site visit. The

program must mark the report as reviewed within one week after the on-site evaluation. If applicable, programs must submit the factual corrections and a Letter of Comment at this time. Additional response time may be requested if needed.

Areas of noncompliance cited by the on-site team are not final until action is taken by ACOTE.

Please note that if the program elects to make a public disclosure of the results of the ACOTE accreditation visit, statements from the final report received AFTER ACOTE action, the Report of ACOTE (RAC), not the evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation (ROSE), must be accurately and completely disclosed (i.e., strengths, suggestions, areas of noncompliance, and ACOTE's final accreditation action). Strengths cited in the report may not be published without also publishing any cited suggestions or areas of noncompliance.

### **ACCREDITATION ACTION**

At its next scheduled meeting, ACOTE will review the evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation, make any amendments, and vote on an accreditation status for the program. If areas of noncompliance are cited in the final report, a due date for the required Plan of Correction will be established and included in the ACOTE action letter sent to the institution within 4-6 weeks after the meeting.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

After the Plan of Correction is submitted by the program and accepted by ACOTE, progress reports will be required periodically until all areas of noncompliance have been corrected.

### **PROGRAM SITE-VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE (PSQ)**

ACOTE has the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of its accreditation process. To assist in these evaluation efforts, we request that program directors, the CEO, and dean each complete the [Program Site-Visit Questionnaire \(PSQ\)](#) at the conclusion of the visit. The survey link will be emailed to the program. This information will be shared with ACOTE as part of their ongoing review process *after* ACOTE accreditation action is formalized.