

ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR NEW PROGRAMS

III. A. 3. STEP THREE: THE INITIAL ON-SITE EVALUATION

THE INITIAL ON-SITE EVALUATION

In preparation for the initial on-site evaluation, the program director may be requested to submit current information to update the initial Report of Self-Study previously submitted, including any additional materials requested in the Report of Preaccreditation Review. This material is submitted prior to the on-site. The members of the preaccreditation review team are generally assigned to serve as either an on-site evaluator or paper reviewer for the on-site visit.

At least two evaluators (members of the Roster of Accreditation Evaluators) conduct the 2½-day on-site evaluation. In emergency situations when a suitable replacement evaluator cannot be located, a qualified AOTA occupational therapy staff member may serve as one of the team members with the advance permission of the program director. A summary report of the visit is made by the evaluators at the final on-site conference and institution officials are given access to the Evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation at that time. To expedite preparation of the report for ACOTE review and action, the program director is requested to submit a copy of the report with any corrections or comments to the AOTA Accreditation Department within one week after the on-site evaluation. (Additional response time is available if needed.) A written response to the on-site visit may also be submitted if there are special considerations or circumstances the program director wishes to be brought to the attention of ACOTE. Additional material or documents will not be considered by ACOTE, however. ACOTE will only consider action on the program based on those materials the on-site team had the opportunity to review and discuss during the on-site visit.

ACCREDITATION ACTION

Following Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) review of the Evaluators' Report of On-Site Evaluation and any comments submitted by the program director, action is taken to grant a status of Accreditation, Accreditation with Conditions, or Accreditation Denied. (Descriptions of each accreditation status are provided in [ACOTE Policy IV.C. Classification of Accreditation Categories](#)). Notification of final action by ACOTE and the link to the Report of ACOTE are e-mailed to the chief executive officer, dean, and program director. The ACOTE Certificate of Accreditation (if awarded) is sent to the program director. Procedures for request for appeal of an ACOTE decision to deny accreditation are found in [ACOTE Policy IV.D. Appeals Process](#).

If ACOTE determines that further information related to the program's compliance with the Standards is required to enable a fair decision to be made regarding the accreditation of the program, it may defer action on accreditation status until the information is received. ACOTE may request submission of additional materials or schedule a second on-site evaluation or fact-finding visit.

If areas of concern are identified in the Report of ACOTE, the program will be required to submit a response to the areas of concern, which must be fully addressed within the time period indicated in the action letter. Subsequent reports will be required until all areas of concern are addressed. Once the program corrects the indicated area(s) of concern, the accreditation status will be changed from Accreditation with Conditions to Accreditation. However, if the program does not adequately address the issues within 60 days or the monitoring period reveals the program is not in compliance, the program's accreditation status will be changed to **Continuing Accreditation-Probationary**.

Following action to award initial accreditation, the next on-site evaluation is scheduled 5 or 7 academic years following ACOTE action on the program's Report of On-Site Evaluation, as determined by ACOTE. Five years will be the standard number of years for initial accreditation. Seven years will be the maximum number of years for initial accreditation of a program with no areas of noncompliance.

ACOTE may grant an accreditation term of 7 years for programs cited with no more than two areas of noncompliance if all cited areas of noncompliance are determined to be fully resolved within 1 year of ACOTE's action on the program's Report of On-Site Evaluation. This decision will be based on ACOTE's review of the Plan of Correction or Progress Report submitted by the program and consideration of any pre-existing areas of noncompliance as well as program changes that have occurred subsequent to the on-site evaluation that affect or are likely to affect the program's full compliance with the Standards, including student learning outcomes. ACOTE may decline to extend the accreditation term of a multi-site program if one or more of the program locations was accredited for a shorter term than the primary location.