



# **Conversations with ACOTE**

**June 15, 2023**

# Outline

- Annual Reports
- ESRC
- Upcoming Workshops
- Resources
- Standards Interpretive Guidance

# Annual Reports

# Annual Reports

- **All Accredited** programs must complete **every year** regardless if the program is completing a self-study or interim report.
- **Timing**
  - You may have to address findings from an annual report as well as items from an interim or self study report
  - Your ACOTE reviewer is the same person and will be able to reconcile any discrepancies.
  - Review your action letter carefully - your action letter will inform you
    - The report ACOTE used to cite or ask for additional information
    - Next steps

# Education Standards Review Committee (ESRC)

- You can find the presentation from the Standards Open Hearing at INSPIRE on the [ACOTE website](#) under “Standards”.
- You can provide feedback on the “General Comment Form” on the ACOTE website or to the Accreditation Department directly ([accred@aota.org](mailto:accred@aota.org)) regarding the ACOTE Standards at any time.
- Please respond to the Educational Standards Review Committee calls for comment!!

# Upcoming Workshops

# Workshops

- **Self-Study Preparation Workshop:** Designed to meet the needs of program directors and faculty preparing for an upcoming self-study review and new program directors wanting to understand more about the accreditation process. Dates and registration information can be found at [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)
- **New Program Workshop:** Thinking about starting an OT or OTA program? Or have you just started the process? The Accreditation Department will be having a 1-day virtual workshop on July 12, 2023. This workshop will review all aspects of becoming accredited including what is needed and what will be asked of your program.
- GO TO Events & Workshops page of our website to register.

*REGISTER AT:  
[www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)!*



# Workshops

Accreditation Actions  
**Events & Workshops**  
News & Updates  
Newsletters Archives



## Educators

Resources for educators and administrators to assist with the accreditation process.



## Become Accredited

Resources for institutions that want to develop a program in occupational therapy.



## Students

Resources for students to find a school and learn more about occupational therapy.

## ACOTE Standards

## Policies & Procedures

## News & Updates

## Accreditation Actions

## Compliments & Complaints

## Accreditation Visits

# Resources

# ACOTE Website

[www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)



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[Educators](#)

[Become Accredited](#)

[Students](#)



# NEWSLETTERS / Virtual Meetings

- Please be sure to read each **Director's Update**, which is posted on the ACOTE website after every ACOTE meeting for the most up to date information regarding **Standards' Interpretations and policy changes**
- Previous publications of the **PD Newsletters** are posted on **www.acoteonline.org** under "News and Updates"
- "Conversations with ACOTE" – scheduled after each ACOTE meeting

# Reminders

- Action letters are sent to programs within **6 weeks** of a meeting.
- Ensure your “FACULTY” tab in the eAccreditation portal is updated.
- Standard A.1.5. requires programs to Inform ACOTE **within 30 days** of the resignation of the program director or appointment of a new or interim program director.
- It is the responsibility of the program director to remain current with the most recent Standards Interpretive Guide and ACOTE® policies located on [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org). Updates to these documents are reported on the ACOTE® website after each ACOTE® meeting.

# Standards

# Standard A.4.2

## Publication of Outcomes

- **Total** number of program graduates for three years is missing or does not include 2022 data.
- Graduation rates for three years are missing or do not include 2022 data.
- NBCOT link is missing from the **program's homepage**.
- Programs were notified if a link was broken or did not take you to the correct page as a result of the NBCOT website changes (ensure you have the correct link - refer to the 2018 Standards and Interpretive Guide it should take you directly to the program result page)
- Programs are responsible to work with NBCOT if they question the NBCOT published data. ACOTE only uses the data received by NBCOT in evaluating compliance with this standard.

# Standard A.4.3

## Publication of ACOTE Information

- Correct ACOTE details are not included on all materials.
- An active link to ACOTE's webpage ([www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org)) is not **on the program's homepage** or misdirects to an incorrect web address.



# Standard A.4.4

## Published Policies and Procedures

- The cost of attendance is not located on the **program's homepage**
- Does not include the total cost of attending and completing the OT/OTA Program
- Does not include all components stated in the 2018 ACOTE Standards Interpretive Guide.

# Standard A.5.3. Program Length

- Assessment of the updated A.5.3. interpretive guide began with reports submitted after August 1, 2022.
- Several webinars and presentations related to this are posted on the ACOTE website (under Education)

# Standard A.5.3. Program Length

- Annual Report Review Process
  - Responses were compared to the Standard and found in compliance or requiring additional information.
  - Requests for additional information require a response to HOW THE PROGRAM IS WORKING TOWARD COMPLIANCE and a rationale related to program length, credits, degree granted.
  - Programs were **not** yet cited as out of compliance on the annual reports - ACOTE asked for additional information related to this standard including a narrative option.

# Guidance for all program levels

- Program length must meet the 2018 ACOTE Standard for A.5.3. as updated with the interpretive guide.
- ACOTE has adopted its interpretive guide that is informed by the [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#). (Institute of Education Sciences: NCES – statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the USDE)
- Program length must be reflective of this ACOTE defined commonly accepted academic standards for degree levels in occupational therapy.

# Guidance for all program levels:

- Any rationale for program length should consider the following factors at a minimum:
  - institutional accrediting, state agency, and federal guidance and policy
  - institutional policy
  - program's curriculum design
- The AOTA Accreditation Department is available to discuss any program specific questions ( [accred@aota.org](mailto:accred@aota.org) )

# Timeline

- **If found to be out of compliance**, the current procedure for correcting an AON applies.
  - Programs have up to 2 years to fix an AON, depending upon program length, and will submit a plan of correction/progress reports during that timeframe.
  - An extension “for cause” for increased time to address an AON may be approved if the program shows evidence of progress toward meeting the standard.

# Moving Forward

- The AOTA Accreditation Department is available to discuss program specific questions ([accred@aota.org](mailto:accred@aota.org)).

# Questions? Concerns?





Interpretive Guide:

## **A.5.3 PROGRAM LENGTH**

# Doctoral Degree Level

## Current Standard

The occupational therapy doctoral degree must be awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both preprofessional and professional preparation, equals a minimum of 6 FTE academic years. The program must document a system and rationale for ensuring that the length of study of the program is appropriate to the expected learning and competence of the graduate.

## Interpretive Guide

An entry-level professional degree awarded for successful completion of a program of study as an occupational therapist, including both preprofessional and professional preparation, **equaling at least 6 full-time-equivalent academic years** to provide the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Any variation from these limits must be explained and justified.

# Master's Degree Level

## Current Standard

The program must document a system and rationale for ensuring that the length of study of the program is appropriate to the expected learning and competence of the graduate.

## Interpretive Guide

An entry-level professional degree awarded for successful completion of a program of study as an occupational therapist, including both preprofessional and professional preparation, **generally requiring at least 5 full-time-equivalent academic years, but no more than 6 full-time-equivalent academic years. One or two years must be full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor's degree to provide the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Any variation from these limits must be explained and justified.**

# Baccalaureate Degree Level

## Current Standard

The program must document a system and rationale for ensuring that the length of study of the program is appropriate to the expected learning and competence of the graduate.

## Interpretive Guide

An entry-level occupational therapy assistant degree granted for the successful completion of a baccalaureate program of study, **usually requiring at least 4 years (or equivalent) of full-time college-level study** to provide the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Any variation from these limits must be explained and justified.

# Associate Degree Level

## Current Standard

The program must document a system and rationale for ensuring that the length of study of the program is appropriate to the expected learning and competence of the graduate.

## Interpretive Guide

An entry-level occupational therapy assistant degree granted for the successful completion of an associate's program of study, **usually requiring at least 2 years (or equivalent) of full-time college-level study** to provide the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. Any variation from these limits must be explained and justified.

# Considerations

- [NCES](#): Definition of Full Time Enrollment – elements include undergraduate versus graduate status; enrollment during “academic year” versus additional sessions.
- Institutional Definition of Academic Year – often defined by semesters (e.g. fall and spring), months (e.g. September – June), or weeks; additional sessions (e.g. summer term, j-term) may be applicable
- Federal Definition of a Credit Hour – perhaps as interpreted by the institutional accreditor.

# Considerations

- Policies on Dual or Concurrent Degrees (e.g. having some credits count toward completion of a baccalaureate degree and count within a graduate program).
- Understanding and analyzing how experiential hours (e.g. for clinical or fieldwork) are translated into assigned credit or unit measurements.