



## ACOTE PROGRAM STATUS DEFINITIONS

The following categories are used by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) based on where the program is in the initial accreditation process and/or evaluation of the extent to which an educational program complies with the ACOTE Accreditation Standards.

### APPLICANT

Applicant programs are new educational programs that have submitted a Letter of Intent to seek ACOTE accreditation. Until Candidacy Status has been granted by ACOTE, these programs cannot admit students into the OT or OTA program.

### CANDIDACY STATUS

Candidacy Status indicates that the program meets the requirements for Candidacy Status and the plans and resource allocations for the proposed program appear to demonstrate the ability to comply with the ACOTE Accreditation Standards. The proposed program may admit its first class of students according to an approved timeline. The program must have a preaccreditation review, complete an initial on-site evaluation, and be granted Accreditation Status before its graduates will be eligible to sit for National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification exam.

### PREACCREDITATION STATUS

Preaccreditation Status indicates that the proposed program would appear to meet the ACOTE Accreditation Standards if fully implemented in accordance with the plans of the sponsoring institution. An initial on-site evaluation will be conducted before an accreditation decision is made.

### ACCREDITATION STATUS

The accreditation review process confirms that the program is in substantial compliance with the ACOTE Accreditation Standards.

### ACCREDITATION WITH CONDITIONS

Accreditation with Conditions is granted to initial programs when the program is in **substantial compliance** with the ACOTE Accreditation Standards but does not meet the minimal requirements to be in full compliance with all the ACOTE Standards. A program may be in substantial compliance if the program has the necessary policies, procedures, and practices in place; however, it is not evident that these policies, procedures, and practices are consistently followed. ACOTE will monitor the Standard(s) and review a monitoring report within **one year** of the ACOTE action.

Once an initial program corrects the indicated area(s) of concern, the accreditation status will be changed to **Accreditation**. However, if the initial program does not adequately address the issue(s) within one year or the monitoring period reveals the program is not in compliance, the program's accreditation status will be changed to **Continuing Accreditation-Probationary**.

New programs seeking initial accreditation may be granted Accreditation or Accreditation with Conditions. If a new program is not in substantial compliance with the Standards, ACOTE may defer Accreditation, and the program will maintain Preaccreditation Status. A program may maintain Preaccreditation Status until all areas of noncompliance are resolved, not to exceed 5 years. If the program is not in substantial compliance with the Standards or is not making progress toward full compliance with the Standards that are vital to the educational program, ACOTE may deny accreditation.

### **CONTINUING ACCREDITATION WITH WARNING**

Continuing accreditation with warning is granted when a program is in noncompliance with one or more of the ACOTE Accreditation Standard(s). The program's current accreditation status will be extended until all areas of noncompliance are resolved based on the timeline below. Once ACOTE determines that the program has come into full compliance, a new accreditation term will be granted. The amount of time the program maintained continuing accreditation with warning status will be deducted from the new accreditation term.

Based on the action of ACOTE, the sponsoring institution is provided with a clear statement of each area of noncompliance. On or before the specified due date, the institution must submit to ACOTE a plan for correcting the indicated area(s) of noncompliance. This plan must include a schedule for correcting areas of noncompliance within a specified period of time that may not exceed the United States Department of Education (USDE) criteria.

- 12 months if the program is less than 1 year in length;
- 18 months if the program is at least 1 year in length, but less than 2 years in length; or
- 2 years if the program is at least 2 years in length.

ACOTE will assess the Plan of Correction and the timeline for the program to be in full compliance with the Standards and will require Progress Reports documenting how each area of noncompliance has been or is being resolved. If ACOTE determines that the program has not returned to compliance with the Standards within the specified period of time (depending on program length), it will change the program's status to Accreditation Withdrawn-Involuntary unless the period for achieving compliance is extended for good cause. The notification of accreditation letter will inform the institution of the status awarded to the educational program.

In deciding to grant an extension of the period for achieving compliance for good cause, ACOTE will review the rationale for the request and assess whether the program has met the following criteria:

- The program has submitted an appropriate plan for achieving compliance within a reasonable timeframe.
- The program has provided a detailed timeline for completion of the plan.
- The program has provided evidence that the plan has been implemented according to the established timeline.
- The program has provided reasonable assurance that the program will achieve compliance as stated in the plan.

ACOTE may also grant an extension of the period for achieving compliance to allow a fact-finding visit or on-site evaluation to be conducted prior to taking action to withdraw accreditation. Extensions of the period of time for achieving compliance are usually limited to a maximum of 2 additional years.

## **PROBATIONARY ACCREDITATION STATUS**

Probationary Accreditation is an accreditation category. Students graduating from a program with Probationary Accreditation status are considered graduates of an accredited program.

A program's status may be changed to Probationary Accreditation for any of the following reasons:

- The areas of noncompliance are so serious that the capability of the program to provide acceptable educational experiences for the students is threatened.
- The program has failed to document significant progress toward compliance with one or more cited areas of noncompliance.
- The program is in jeopardy of having its accreditation status withdrawn due to the mandated time limit for carrying areas of noncompliance.
- The program fails to comply with administrative requirements.

Probationary Accreditation is usually limited to 1 year. However, extensions may be granted by ACOTE for good cause. Programs receiving ACOTE's notification of a change of status to Probationary Accreditation must notify currently enrolled students and those seeking admission that the program has been placed on probation. Probationary status may be removed when the program has demonstrated that it is in substantial compliance with the Standards:

- Because the areas of noncompliance are resolved;
- Because the program has documented significant progress toward compliance with the cited areas of noncompliance within the allowed time period; or
- Because the program has complied with administrative requirements.

Failure to come into substantial compliance with the Standards within the allowed time period will result in a change of status to Accreditation Withdrawn.

## **INACTIVE STATUS**

Inactive status is a special status applied only to programs that are not currently enrolling new students and do not plan to enroll new students in the future. The status "inactive" does not replace any other current accreditation status. The designation follows the regular accreditation status (e.g., Accreditation-Inactive or Probationary Accreditation-Inactive). Students graduating from a program with Accreditation-Inactive or Probationary Accreditation-Inactive status are considered graduates of an accredited program.