



Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®)
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Dear Prospective Applicant:

This is to provide information regarding the accreditation process for developing occupational therapy educational programs that are seeking accreditation for additional locations and its impact on students enrolled in these programs. Universities and colleges generally contact the Accreditation Department at AOTA headquarters early in their consideration of initiating an OT or OTA educational program at an additional location. This is to allow for completion of the accreditation process prior to the graduation of the first class of students.

An additional location of an occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) prior to students' graduation in order for those graduates to be eligible to sit for the national certification examination offered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT®). Therefore, students who enter developing programs are taking a risk that the program **will not** obtain accreditation and therefore, they **will not** be eligible to sit for the NBCOT® certification exam.

Any program that is seeking accreditation for an additional location must obtain "Candidacy Status" for that location by submitting a Candidacy Application describing how the program plans to demonstrate compliance with the [ACOTE Accreditation Standards](#) prior to the admission of the first class of students into the additional location. If the application is accepted and the program location is granted "Candidacy Status", the program will continue through the initial accreditation process that generally includes an initial on-site evaluation. (See [ACOTE Policy IV.B.2. Additional Locations](#)).

It is suggested that you speak with the director of any new program that you are interested in attending regarding the accreditation status of the program and specifically whether the program has received Candidacy Status for the additional location. If the program has applied to seek accreditation, the program director will receive a tentative schedule of the accreditation process which delineates a sequence of required steps the program must complete before accreditation is granted.

If you are uncomfortable with the **risk** involved in entering a developing program, it may be better for you to pursue one that is already accredited. However, the accreditation process is designed to facilitate development and substantial support is provided to the program during the process.

Please feel free to contact the AOTA Accreditation Department at accred@aota.org if you have additional questions. Best wishes in your pursuit of an occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant degree!