

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

IV. B. 1. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES

MINOR AND SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM CHANGES

When an institution having an entry-level occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant educational program makes a decision to change the program, the following review procedures apply:

- Minor Program Changes or Additions

Minor program changes or additions must be submitted through ACOTE Online (<https://acote.aota.org>) using the “Substantive Change” tab. This information will be forwarded to the ACOTE reviewers assigned to the program and the program will be notified if any additional information is required. There is no separate accreditation action necessary for such changes. Minor program changes include the following:

- admission requirements and selection criteria
- reduction in frequency of student admissions (e.g., not admitting students for one admission cycle or reducing admissions from once a year to every other year)
- elimination of an approved track
- changes in how the program is offered (e.g., move from a combined baccalaureate/master’s-degree-level program to a professional entry-level master’s program).
- changes to the curriculum delivery model or content for less than one third of courses (e.g., change from in-classroom to distance education delivery model)
- curricular adjustments
- changes between quarter/semester systems
- move to new facilities within the current administrative unit on the same campus (include information on how the change of location affects compliance with the Standards, such as the impact on classrooms, laboratory, storage, offices, and space for private advising of students)
- physical resources
- changes to the institution’s name or the table of organization
- transfer of program sponsorship/ownership with the program remaining within the current facility with no change in resources or delivery model (notification must be submitted within 30 days of the change and include details of the change, the impact on the program, and the regional/national accreditation status of the new sponsoring institution. NOTE: If the new sponsoring institution plans to relocate the program to a different institution within the next 5 years, it must apply for separate accreditation through the initial accreditation process described in [ACOTE Manual Policy III.A. Overview of the Process](#)).

Minor changes will be processed and reviewed by the assigned ACOTE reviewers at six points during the year. Minor changes do not require approval prior to implementation by the program. The following deadlines should be used for submitting a Minor Program Change:

- January 10th
- March 10th
- May 10th
- July 10th
- September 10th
- November 10th

Note that changes to program officials (CEO, Dean, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, or Student Occupational Therapy Association Advisor) should be reported by using the designated Program Data Forms available in the [Accreditation Surveys, Forms, and Templates](#) section of the ACOTE webpage and not as a minor change.

Program director changes should be reported as directed by [ACOTE Policy IV.E.4. Program Director Changes](#).

- Significant Program Changes or Additions

Significant program changes or additions require ACOTE review and approval prior to the admission of students into the new/changed program. The following are considered to be significant program changes or additions:

- addition of a student cohort
- addition of a weekend or evening cohort
- addition of an extended or part-time cohort
- addition of a distance learning cohort*
- a planned headcount increase of 25% or more since the last on-site visit
- increase in frequency of student admissions
- changes to the curriculum delivery model or content for more than one third of courses (e.g., change from in-classroom to distance education delivery model)
- addition or change of participating colleges in an accredited consortium
- move to new facilities within the current administrative unit, but at a different campus (include information on how the change of location affects compliance with the Standards, such as the impact on classrooms, laboratory, storage, offices, and space for private advising of students)

Programs must submit a request for approval of a significant change through ACOTE Online

(<https://acote.aota.org>) using the “Substantive Change” tab. The request must include the following information:

- the proposed addition or change;
- the requirements for institutional/state approval of the addition or change and the status of that approval;
- the month/year the proposed addition or change would occur; and
- the accommodations to support the addition/change, including implications for 1) faculty, mentors, or other support staff composition, 2) resources, 3) budget, 4) curriculum design, 5) admission information and criteria, 6) course sequence, 7) course content, and 8) fieldwork.

*If the proposal includes the addition of a distance learning or online cohort, the program must also address, in depth, Standard A.2.19 which states:

If the program offers distance education, it must include

- *a process through which the program establishes that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives academic credit;*
- *technology and resources that are adequate to support a distance-learning environment; and*
- *a process to ensure that faculty are adequately trained and skilled to use distance education methodologies.*

The program must also describe how the proposed change reflects the philosophy of learning (Standard A.6.5) the mission of the institution (Standard A.6.6), and the curriculum design (Standard A.6.7). In addition, any other Standards that are impacted by this change must be addressed, including but not limited to:

A.2.24.	Equipment and Supplies
A.2.25.	Evaluative and Treatment Methodologies
A.2.26.	Library/Reference Materials
A.2.27.	Instructional Aids and Technology
A.3.6.	Evaluation Content and Methods
A.3.7.	Evaluation on a Regular Basis
A.3.8.	Student Support Services
A.4.1.	Accurate Program Publications

The following deadlines should be used for submitting a Significant Program Change to ACOTE:

- February 20th (for review at the April ACOTE meeting)
- June 20th (for review at the August ACOTE meeting)
- October 20th (for review at the December ACOTE meeting)

Upon review of the submitted information by ACOTE, the program will be notified whether the accreditation status of the existing program will accrue to the addition or change or if additional information is required. The accreditation status of the existing program will not accrue to the additional/changed program until ACOTE

accreditation review procedures are successfully completed. When considering significant change requests, ACOTE will consider any outstanding areas of noncompliance. ACOTE may also elect to conduct an abbreviated on-site evaluation to assess the significant change prior to final approval.

DETERMINATION OF A MINOR CHANGE OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

If it is not clear whether the change is classified as a minor change or a significant change, the program must submit a letter to the ACOTE Chairperson, c/o the AOTA Accreditation Department, that requests clarification. The letter must be signed by the program director and the administrator to whom the program director reports and may be sent electronically to accred@aota.org. The letter must include information about the proposed addition or change, the requirements for institutional/state approval of the addition or change, and the status of that approval. That information will be reviewed by the ACOTE Executive Committee and a determination of the applicable policy will be made and communicated to the program.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES REQUIRING SEPARATE ACCREDITATION ACTION

In any of the following situations, programs must apply for separate accreditation through the initial accreditation process described in [ACOTE Manual Policy III.A. Overview of the Process.](#):

1. An institution with an accredited occupational therapy master's or doctoral program seeks to add a new occupational therapy assistant program.
2. An institution with an accredited occupational therapy master's program seeks to add a new occupational therapy doctoral program.
3. An institution with an accredited occupational therapy assistant program seeks to add a new occupational therapy master's or doctoral program.

NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Accredited occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant programs that are planning to seek accreditation for an additional location must follow the initial accreditation process described in [ACOTE Manual Policy IV.B.2. Additional Locations.](#)