

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION
AND THE
AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
ASSOCIATION**

This document constitutes an agreement between the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA), and the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), an associated body of the AOTA Board of Directors.

Statement of Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into by the parties in order to acknowledge the central role of the ACOTE accreditation process to the recognition of occupational therapy as a distinct and autonomous profession, and its work in sustaining partnerships on behalf of the profession with critical stakeholders including the U.S. Department of Education, private accreditation agencies, institutions of higher education, and the public. This agreement also serves to recognize the mutually supporting activities of the Association and Council and delineates the commitments of the parties to each other.

The Principles

The Parties agree to the following principals:

1. The primary functions of ACOTE are to (1) establish standards for accreditation of educational programs for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants at all educational levels; (2) establish policies and procedures to ensure that educational programs comply with such standards; and (3) conduct accreditation reviews in accordance with such standards, policies, and procedures.
2. ACOTE recognizes that AOTA is the professional society for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants, and further recognizes that the infrastructure to support the professional activities and needs of its members resides within the AOTA.
3. AOTA recognizes that ACOTE, as part of the professional society, serves the needs of the profession by protecting the public, including students seeking quality education and consumers of occupational therapy services, by ensuring that occupational therapy academic programs are qualified to prepare individuals as occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants.
4. AOTA and ACOTE acknowledge that the Council must have autonomy to ensure that its professional accreditation functions are carried out independent of improper influence by AOTA.
5. ACOTE's need for the autonomy related to professional accreditation functions is compelled by two facts: (1) ACOTE's accreditation activities are dependent upon the avoidance of any

conflict of interest, whether real or perceived, in making judgements related to its primary functions as delineated in section (1); and (2) the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation require that an accrediting body, "is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education or training offered by the institutions or programs it accredits."

6. AOTA shall respect the confidentiality of all accreditation activities and decisions of ACOTE. AOTA recognizes that the ACOTE Chairperson's input is critical to the deliberations of the AOTA Board of Directors, and thus the Chairperson will be invited to attend meetings of the Board and participate as a member of the Board's budget review committee.

Responsibilities of the Parties

Consistent with the mutual desire to create a relationship in harmony with the principles stated above, AOTA and ACOTE agree as follows:

Accreditation Functions - ACOTE shall have complete and unfettered autonomy in establishing standards for educational programs; developing and implementing policies, rules, and procedures for conducting accreditation reviews; and making accreditation decisions. AOTA recommendations relating to such standards will be considered within the framework of ACOTE's standards review and the formal process designated for stakeholder input.

Budget - ACOTE shall have the exclusive authority to prepare and manage its own budget and establish accreditation fees. The AOTA Board of Directors shall review and approve ACOTE's proposed budget consistent with its fiduciary responsibilities and the requirement that such budget provide for adequate administrative staff and financial resources as appropriate for ACOTE's scale of accreditation activities and operations. The ACOTE Chairperson shall participate in the Board's deliberations on the ACOTE budget.

Legal Counsel - ACOTE shall have the sole authority to select competent outside legal counsel to represent its accreditation interests. AOTA shall participate in the process of identifying counsel and determining counsel's compensation.

Insurance - AOTA will procure insurance to cover liability for all of ACOTE's accreditation activities and operations. Such coverage shall expressly include accreditation decisions and actions. AOTA shall provide indemnification for ACOTE directors, volunteers, employees, and agents for all actions taken within the scope of their accreditation activities. AOTA shall also provide insurance coverage for accidental injury or death for ACOTE volunteers while traveling on ACOTE business which is the same as such coverage provided for AOTA volunteers.

Operational and Management Support - AOTA will annually make available the funds reasonably necessary to support the operations of the Council and its functions. This will include infrastructure, operational and management support. This support, which includes expenses for items such as staff salaries and benefits; office and filing space, phones and phone service, including conference calling capabilities; computers, software and IT support; management support and relevant overhead allocations, will be charged back to the ACOTE project line of the AOTA budget. ACOTE revenue and operating costs will be recognized as discrete items in the

auditor's report and in the year-end budget report to the Board. ACOTE will review its revenues and operating costs annually through a review of the auditor's statement.

Accreditation Personnel - ACOTE shall have a full time director who shall serve as ACOTE's principal representative to its communities of interest. This position shall be held by a person who is an occupational therapist, holds an academic doctorate, has expertise and experience in educational accreditation, and who commands respect and has credibility with the academic and accreditation communities. The hiring and / or termination of said Director will be a joint decision of ACOTE and AOTA. AOTA shall accept any recommendation from ACOTE's Executive Committee with respect to the hiring and termination of its director unless such hiring or termination would be likely to expose AOTA to legal liability or would demonstratively disrupt the operations of AOTA. AOTA shall not reject the recommendation of ACOTE's Executive Committee with respect to the hiring and termination of its director based on a difference of opinion regarding accrediting decisions, standards or practices. ACOTE's accreditation director shall have responsibility for identifying ACOTE's staffing needs and making hiring (and termination) decisions, in consultation with the Council, to meet those needs within the parameters of existing AOTA management and personnel policies and approved personnel budget.

Use of Technology – ACOTE will endeavor to streamline operations and decrease costs over time. Consistent with this goal, the Council will develop and submit to the AOTA Board a developmental plan to identify and effectively utilize new technology that will enhance the accreditation function.

Agreed to this 29 day of January 2005

For ACOTE: Paula Kramer For AOTA: Coralyn B...