



**Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes**

New or Lapsed Program Accreditation Process

Dear Occupational Therapy Program,

Welcome to the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) occupational therapy academic accreditation process. The CAOT Academic Credentialing Council (ACC) is responsible for this process and will be working closely with you over the next few years as we collaborate together in the development of your occupational therapy program.

As you are aware, the accreditation of professional university programs is gaining great importance in this age of national and international workforce mobility. You can benefit from the accreditation process as it serves to:

- Demonstrate Canadian occupational therapy programs which meet or exceed minimal educational standards.
- Foster excellence in education via an emphasis on quality assurance, program improvement and program responsiveness to the changing needs of Canadians and the profession.

We would like to take this time to outline the process that should lead you to becoming a CAOT accredited occupational therapy program. The following material will guide you during this process. Please note that the following material is still in a draft form as there may be minor changes to steps 3 and 4 in the future.

At anytime during the academic accreditation process you may contact Kathy Van Benthem, Director of Standards at 613-523-2268 ext 223 or by email at kvanbenthem@caot.ca with comments, questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sandra Hobson
Chair, Academic Credentialing Council

Cc Kathy Van Benthem, Director of Standards, CAOT

Accreditation Process for New or Lapsed Programs

There are four main steps or activities that must be completed in order to attain CAOT academic accreditation. You will find all the forms and contact information required on the CAOT website at www.caot.ca.

It is recommended that you begin the steps once you have obtained all the necessary university and provincial approval for your occupational therapy program.

It is very important that you read the entire CAOT Academic Accreditation Self-Study Guide (2005). A hard copy of the Self-Study Guide can be mailed to you at your request and can also be found at <http://www.caot.ca/pdfs/GuideComplete.pdf>.

Your academic accreditation activities will be centred around the completion of the CAOT Accreditation Standards and Review Form that is found on pages 16-44 in the Self-Study Guide. There are nine principle Standards, each with several “Tests of Quality” and corresponding “Indicators”. Your collection and presentation of information (or evidence) to support your achievement of the Indicators as well as two on-site visits by members of the ACC will be used to a) assist you in developing your new program and b) assist the ACC in determining your accreditation award. A glossary of accreditation terms can be found on page 45 of the Self-Study Guide. Definitions of the Indicator Levels 1-4 can be found in Appendix A.

Step 1: Submit a letter to the CAOT Director of Standards indicating interest in initiating the accreditation process. Attach all information required to support your achievement of all Level 1 Indicators. Level 1 Indicators are considered the first screening process and will determine if your program meets the necessary criteria to attain the “Eligible for Accreditation” status.

Level 1 Indicators are found in the Self-Study Guide. Level 1 Indicators are the indicators listed below and are found in the CAOT Accreditation Standards and Review Form (pages 16-44) located in the Self-Study Guide.

1.11	1.12	1.14	1.15
2.11	2.84		
5.11	5.14		
6.21			

For each indicator above please supply the suggested sources of information (evidence) as indicated beside each indicator.

Example:

Test of Quality	Indicator	Suggested Sources of Information
1.1 The program has official standing within the university structure.	1.11 The Occupational Therapy degree is granted by a university.	A copy of the university charter.

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ACC Response: The ACC will respond within 4-6 weeks indicating whether the occupational therapy program has attained an Eligible for Accreditation Status. Comments on the completeness of the Level 1 Indicators will be made at that time. All Level 1 Indicators must be met with sufficient information in order to proceed to Step 2. **If all Level 1 Indicators are met** the program will be given an academic accreditation schedule indicating timelines and deadlines and may proceed to Step 2. **If the ACC requires additional information or the Level 1 Indicators were not all met** then the ACC will schedule a teleconference with the program to discuss what information is still required or what program development must occur in order for the program to attain an Eligible for Accreditation Status.

Step 2: Complete a self-study addressing all Level 2 Indicators and participate in an ACC on-site visit (approx 2 days).

Information for scheduling an on-site visit and the Level 2 Indicators are found in the Self-Study Guide. Level 2 Indicators are the indicators listed below and are found in the CAOT Accreditation Standards and Review Form (pages 16-44) in the Self-Study Guide.

Level 2 Indicators are:

1.13	1.21	1.22	1.23	1.24								
2.12	2.13	2.21	2.22	2.23	2.31	2.32	2.42	2.51	2.52	2.53	2.61	2.62
2.72	2.85	2.86	2.87	2.89	2.810							
3.11	3.22											
4.11	4.12	4.13	4.14	4.15	4.21	4.22						
5.13	5.21	5.31	5.32	5.33	5.36	5.52	5.61	5.71	5.72	5.73	5.74	
									a			
6.11	6.12	6.22	6.25									
7.11	7.14											
8.11	8.12	8.13	8.21	8.22	8.31	8.32	8.33	8.41	8.42	8.43		
9.11												

An on-site visit with 2 members of the ACC will take place approximately half way through the program. During the first on-site visit the program will demonstrate that all Level 2 Indicators have been met.

ACC Response: At the end of the on-site visit the on-site team will provide immediate feedback on the Level 2 Indicators. The on-site team will also develop a report that will be presented to the program within 4-6 weeks post-visit. All the Level 2 Indicators must be met by the first semester of the last year of the program's first cohort in order for the program to retain its Eligible for Accreditation status.

Step 3: Complete the remaining Level 3 and Level 4 Indicators. Level 3 and Level 4 Indicators are found in the Self-Study Guide.

Send the completed remaining Self-Study Guide Materials to CAOT by the deadline established.

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Level 3 Indicators are:

2.41	2.43	2.71	2.81	2.82	2.83	2.81	2.82	2.83	2.81 1	2.81 2		
3.12	3.13	3.14	3.21	3.31								
4.23												
	5.22	5.34 a & b	5.35	5.41	5.42	5.43	5.44	5.51	5.53	5.72 b	5.81 5.82 5.83	5.84
6.23	6.24											
7.12	7.13	7.21	7.22	7.23								
8.23	8.44											
9.12												

Level 4 Indicators are:

3.32
5.12
5.37

ACC Response: The ACC off-site team will develop an off-site report and the ACC will send the report to the program within 4 to 6 weeks of receiving the report. The program may respond with comments.

Step 4: Collaborate in an on-site visit with the ACC on-site team. A final on-site visit will occur in the last year of the first cohort of students before graduation. Any remaining minor issues from Indicator Levels 1 and 2 will be reviewed as well as all Level 3 and 4 Indicators. On the last day of the on-site visit the on-site team will review their findings with the program. No accreditation award is discussed at this point.

ACC Response: The Chair of the on-site team will complete a report which will be sent to the program approximately 4 to 6 weeks post-visit. The program has 4 weeks to respond to the report.

Accreditation Award: The report of the on-site team Chair will be used by the ACC in determining the Accreditation Award recommended for the program. The final award must be approved by the CAOT Board of Directors. The program will be notified approximately 8 weeks post on-site visit of the ACC recommendation.

*Please see Self-Study Guide Policy 8207 regarding Accreditation Appeals.

APPENDIX A

Level 1-4 Definitions

Level 1: Absolute- These Indicators are critical and the program may not progress into the accreditation process until they are all completely met.

Level 2: Essential- These Indicators demonstrate that the program has met essential indicators in order to retain Eligible for Accreditation Status.

Level 3: Desirable- These indicators demonstrate the quality of the program. The ACC may consider missing several indicators of a common Test of Quality as a serious deficiency in program quality.

Level 4: Exemplary- These indicators demonstrate a superior level of quality of a program.