VI. K. CERTIFICATION EXAM PASS RATE REQUIREMENTS

STANDARDS RELATED TO CERTIFICATION EXAM PASS RATES

The following are requirements of the *Accreditation Standards for a Doctoral-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, Accreditation Standards for a Master's-Degree-Level Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist,* and *Accreditation Standards for an Educational Program for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* related to national certification exam pass rates:

A.4.2. Accurate and current information regarding student outcomes must be readily available to the public in at least one publication or Web page. The following data must be reported in an aggregate for the three most recent calendar years and specify the

- 3-year time period being reported,
- Total number of program graduates during that period,
- Total number of eligible first-time test takers of the national certification examination during that period,
- Total number of eligible first-time test takers who passed the exam during that period, and
- Percentage of the total number of eligible first-time test takers who passed the exam during that period.

A.5.4. The average total pass rate of [OT doctoral/OT master's/OTA] program graduates taking the national certification exam for the first time over the three most recent calendar years must be 70% or higher.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. Programs must use the number of first-time takers and number of first-time takers passing the certification exam that are reported by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). To access this information online, programs must obtain a username and password from NBCOT (www.nbcot.org). The rationale for using NBCOT's data is to assure that verifiable data is being used by all programs. It is possible that the program's tracking of graduate performance on the certification exam will not match the reports generated by NBCOT. The program may contact NBCOT to address discrepancies.

2. In addition to publication of first-time taker pass rates, the program may choose to publish additional information related to certification exam scores. For example, the program may want to publish pass rates that include successful retakes. The program may choose to give a context for the pass rates, such as the percentage of ESL (English as a Second Language) students in the program. Publication of additional information should include the years from which data is being reported.

3. The percentage pass rate must be calculated for the **TOTAL** number of FIRST-TIME exam takers during the **THREE** most recent calendar years.

PROCEDURE FOR CALCULATION

The total number of students who passed during 3-year time period is divided by the total number of first-time test takers during the 3-year time period. The resulting number is multiplied by 100 to obtain the percentage of students who passed during the 3-year time period.

(Total Students Who Passed / Total First-time Takers) x 100 = Percent Passing

Example of Calculation

	First-time Test Takers	Students Who Passed	Annual Pass Rate
Year 1	15	12	80%
Year 2	12	8	67%
Year 3	13	11	85%
Total	40	31	78%* (Note that the 3-year pass rate can NOT be obtained by averaging annual pass rates together.)

*The pass rate for the 3-year period is (31/40) x 100 = 77.5, which may be rounded up to 78%.

4. The 3-year percentage pass rate must be updated and published annually.

5. Evidence that the pass rate is readily available to the public in at least one publication or Web page will be required on the Annual Report submitted to ACOTE.

6. Exam pass rate data will be verified through information provided by NBCOT.

7. In the event that the reported average total pass rate of program graduates taking the national certification exam for the first time over the three most recent calendar years is less than 70%, the program's assigned ACOTE reviewers will be notified.

8. In the event that a program has fewer than 25 first-time test takers over the three most recent calendar years, the program may include first-time test takers from additional years until the total reaches 25 or until the five most recent calendar years have been included in the total. If the total number of first-time test takers for the five most recent calendar years is less than 25, that number should be reported and will be evaluated for compliance with Standard A.5.4.

CITATION OF AREAS OF NONCOMPLIANCE RELATED TO STANDARD A.5.4.

ACOTE may cite an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. based on certification exam data reported by NBCOT as part of a regularly scheduled review of a Report of On-Site Evaluation, Annual Report, Interim Report, Plan of Correction, Progress Report, or other ACOTE report.

In addition, ACOTE receives an annual report on certification exam pass rates of all programs from NBCOT. Upon receipt of this report, ACOTE will request that all programs with a 3-year certification exam pass rate below 70% that are not currently addressing an area of noncompliance with Standard A.5.4. must submit a report to ACOTE related to the low pass rate. The program's report will be reviewed at the next scheduled ACOTE meeting and an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. may be cited at that time.

CORRECTION OF AREAS OF NONCOMPLIANCE RELATED TO STANDARD A.5.4.

The current ACOTE policy governing extensions (ACOTE Policy IV.E.2.) states that extensions beyond the maximum time frame for achieving compliance are usually limited to a maximum of 2 additional years. However, in recognition of the 3-year period for evaluating compliance with Standard A.5.4., ACOTE has determined that an extension for good cause longer than 2 years should be available to programs that demonstrate the potential to achieve compliance with this Standard.

The following procedure will be followed when ACOTE determines that a program is noncompliant with Standard A.5.4.:

1. The program is **initially** cited by ACOTE as being in noncompliance with Standard A.5.4.
   a) The program is requested to submit a Plan of Correction with an amended program evaluation plan that includes the following:
      1) Analysis of factors contributing to low pass rates.
      2) Plan to address targeted factors.
      3) Annual improvement targets.
      4) A timeline for correction within 2 years.

2. If the program is still in noncompliance at the end of 2 years, it may request an **extension for good cause:**
   a) Rationale for extension for good cause:
      1) The program has implemented the plan of correction and, if necessary, has modified the plan based on evaluation data.
      2) The program has maintained or demonstrated an upward trend in the pass rate during the correction period.
      3) The additional extension is limited to two years.
      4) If the program's pass rate decreases, the program may be placed on Probationary Accreditation.

3. If the program is still in noncompliance at the end of the extension (a maximum of 4 years since the area of noncompliance was originally cited), the program may request a **second extension for good cause**:
   a) Rationale for second extension for good cause:
      1) The program has implemented the plan of correction and, if necessary, has modified the plan based on evaluation data.
      2) The program has achieved at least a 70% pass rate for first-time test takers in the 4th year of the correction period.
      3) The extension is for up to 2 years.

4. If the program is unable to meet the criteria in #2 or #3, procedures will be implemented to withdraw accreditation.

ACOTE may remove an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. when a program reports that the 3-year pass rate has reached 70% or above and that information is verified by NBCOT.

In addition, ACOTE may also remove an area of noncompliance related to Standard A.5.4. if data provided in NBCOT's annual report of pass rates indicates that the program's 3-year pass rate has reached 70% or above. That action will be taken at the next scheduled meeting of ACOTE.