Despite the fact that there is evidence suggesting that state regulation of various professions has existed since the 17th century, it was not until the 1970s that Florida and New York became the first states to regulate the practice of occupational therapy. Today, practice is regulated on a state by state basis. Therefore, each state is responsible for the implementation of specific laws and regulations governing the practice of occupational therapy (Rose, 1996).

State practice acts may take the following forms:

- **Licensure**: A process regulated by the government that grants permission for an individual to engage in certain professional practices. A practitioner must demonstrate a specified level of competency to be granted a license. Licensure is viewed as a practice that is in place to protect the public from unqualified practitioners.

- **Registration**: The practice of listing individuals on a roster maintained by government or private agencies. There may or may not be criteria or standards for being included on the roster. Registration may be voluntary or mandatory.

- **Title Control or Trademark**: Title control or trademark restricts the use of a particular title to an individual who has met specified certification requirements. In other words, if an individual has not completed the appropriate requirements, her or she may not call him- or herself an occupational therapy practitioner.

Table 4–1 provides a description of the types of regulatory processes imposed by each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

### Table 4–1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>License</th>
<th>Mandatory or Voluntary Certification</th>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Title Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and District of Columbia</td>
<td>Indiana, Missouri, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin</td>
<td>Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota</td>
<td>Colorado, Hawaii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Credentialing for Programs and Organizations**

Accreditation is the method by which a program or organization receives credentialing and which involves development, promotion, and ongoing re-evaluation of standards of excellence in occupational therapy education (NSPOT, 1917). Accreditation is awarded to a program that demonstrates it has met or exceeded a predetermined set of criteria (Gray, 1993). Accreditation may be granted to educational programs, health care organizations, school, and other organizations.

The governing board overseeing this process is the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). The mission statement of ACOTE includes four goals and objectives: