

NCTRC Newsletter

FALL 2005 EDITION

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A Message from the Chair

Betsy Kennedy, M.S., CTRS, Chair of the NCTRC Board of Directors

It is with great honor that I become the Chair of the 2005-2006 NCTRC Board of Directors. As the new Board takes charge of the leadership of NCTRC, a special thank you is extended to Al Kaye, past Chair, for his mentoring and hard work. Al was instrumental in establishing effective operations and governance for the NCTRC Board of Directors. I would also like to thank outgoing Board and Committee members: Diane Groff (NC), Pat Malik (IL), Sandy Segraves (CA), and Jim Shea (CT) for their dedicated

commitment to the work of NCTRC and the CTRS credential. A special welcome is extended to new Board members Becky Brewster (OH), Leslie DeVries (IL), and Larry Long (MD) as well as new Committee members Suzanne Melcher (NC) and Cathy Coyle (PA). We are all looking forward to a productive year.

NCTRC has established an extensive work plan for the 2005-2006 year. One aspect of the work plan that I would like to highlight is the focus upon customer satisfaction

and increasing the awareness and recognition of the CTRS credential. NCTRC's customers are numerous and vary significantly. All of these customers require a variety of services from NCTRC. NCTRC, through the work of the Credentialing Specialists, fields a wide variety of questions and requests everyday. NCTRC strives to provide accurate and timely services to all of its customers. Within the NCTRC work plan, the Board of Directors and the staff have established several

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Branding of the CTRS Credential

Bob Riley, Ph.D., CTRS, Executive Director

Greetings from NCTRC! NCTRC maintains a steadfast approach to the validation of the CTRS credential by strictly adhering to recognized industry standards. This statement is well supported by the fact that the CTRS credentialing program is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the recognized international leader in credentialing accreditation. As in other top-notch industry professions, NCTRC has established strict qualifications for entry into the profession and utilizes a psychometric-balanced computer based exam to serve as

the final step toward gaining CTRS certification. Certificants maintain their active certification status through professional practice in the field and continuing education or by retesting every five years.

The establishment of the structure and process of a professional credentialing organization represents only a part of the effort necessary to create an internationally recognized program. Critical to optimum success, a program must also achieve full recognition by its customer base as well as by its related stakeholders. For NCTRC, this

includes recreation therapists, employers, health care regulatory and accreditation organizations, and of course, consumers. Addressing the issue of credentialing recognition in an effort to increase the value of the CTRS credential, NCTRC has launched an intensive and focused marketing plan. Budget allocations for marketing activities have been increased three-fold and tangible materials illustrating the value of the CTRS credential are available for distribution at no cost. At the heart of this plan however, is the premise that all current CTRS certifi-

(Continued on page 2)



“At the heart of this plan however, is the premise that all current CTRS certificants must play an active role in the industry “branding” of the CTRS credential.”

(Continued from page 1)

From the Chair of the Board

new services that are designed to improve customer service. These new services are as follows:

- Conversion of the NCTRC website to on-line processing.
- Submission of all new applications, renewals, recertification, and maintenance forms on-line.
- Acceptance of credit cards for on-line payment of fees.
- New streamline processing of the recertification applications.
- Creation of personal data file link on the NCTRC website. This access link will provide for personal information retrieval and updates so that your NCTRC file will always be up to date.

Another important aspect of the Board of Directors work plan is to increase the value and worth of the CTRS credential. Increasing public awareness and

recognition of the CTRS credential is critical to the expansion of the use of the credential. To address this issue, NCTRC has developed three new marketing brochures: *The CTRS Profile*, *Why Become a CTRS?* and *Why Hire a CTRS?*. All three brochures are available FREE OF CHARGE for CTRSs to use for professional networking. Just call the NCTRC office and request the brochures and they will be put in the mail to you. Better yet, download them from a PDF file on the NCTRC website! A fourth marketing brochure will be available early next year entitled the *Testimonial Brochure*. The focus of this brochure is to highlight the professional relationship between CTRSs and the TR consumer. In addition to the marketing brochures NCTRC has also developed a Power-Point presentation pertaining to the CTRS Profile Study conducted in 2004. A copy of this presentation is also available on the NCTRC website.

NCTRC continues to expand its presence at conferences. In June 2005,

NCTRC sponsored a booth at the International Dementia Conference in Washington, DC. This fall, NCTRC will be represented at several major conferences, including ATRA and NTRS. The NCTRC Board of Directors understands the value of NCTRC's visibility at health and human service conferences and supports the NCTRC staff as they attend, present, and exhibit at more conferences both within and outside of the therapeutic recreation profession.

Lastly, NCTRC will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2006! As we approach the 25th Anniversary, it appears appropriate to reflect upon all the achievements that NCTRC has accomplished through the active engagement of its volunteer leaders and supportive membership. We whole heartedly "thank you" for your loyal dedication and support through the past years and for your continued support of the "CTRS Credential."

The best is yet to come.

(Continued from page 1)

From the Executive Director

cants must play an active role in the industry "branding" of the CTRS credential.

On the academic front, TR educators must promote the CTRS credential as an element of the professionalization process that all students are exposed to during undergraduate training. Entry-level recreation therapists must be "imprinted" early in their professional development about the need to be professionally active and engaged through obtaining the CTRS credential. The educational process must serve as the conduit for providing the necessary information and opportunities for successful entry into the profession.

Within workplace environments, recreation therapists must take the lead in promoting the CTRS credential. Although NCTRC can provide critical leadership, marketing materials, and technical assistance, it remains the role of the CTRS to demonstrate the value of the credential and to advocate for its use

within his or her work setting. As such, CTRSs should adopt the following principles to promote the recognition and value of the CTRS credential:

1. CTRSs should promote their certification by openly displaying their credential, wearing their certification pin, and by introducing themselves as a "CTRS".
2. CTRSs should maintain active certification status and participate in viable continuing education programs to further enhance their level of knowledge and competence.
3. CTRSs should inform healthcare consumers about the CTRS credential and the professional level of care that they provide within the health and human services delivery network.
4. CTRSs should explain to all constituents the difference between a "certified" and "non-certified" recreation therapist. The CTRS credential is an objective and valid measure of knowledge which validates that an individual is qualified

to provide recreation therapy services.

5. CTRSs should promote the credential to their employers and other health care and human service administrators in an effort to market the accomplishments of Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists.

The path to full recognition of the CTRS credential has proven to be a long and beneficial journey. Much progress has been made along the way. However, the issue of CTRS recognition remains a significant challenge for both NCTRC and its professional partners within therapeutic recreation. Although the structure and process of certification are well in place, extensive efforts must be taken to promote the value and worth of the CTRS credential. This is a goal that all CTRSs must take seriously and work diligently with NCTRC and other professional organizations to achieve during the ensuing years.

Field Placement Supervision: A Readiness Checklist

Jan Hodges, Ph.D., CTRS, Member, Standards Hearing Committee

The field placement is an experiential learning component of the therapeutic recreation education process that takes place over a minimum of 12 weeks, in an actual therapeutic recreation service setting. To be successful, the experience should be highly structured, giving the student a full range of practice in typical job requirements under the close guidance and mentoring of a CTRS. Agreeing to serve as this teaching mentor is a huge responsibility. If you are considering entering into this relationship, make sure you are eligible to provide an experience that will meet the field placement requirements of NCTRC. In preparation, ask yourself these questions:

1. Are you employed full-time by your agency to provide therapeutic recreation services? Full-time is defined as a minimum of 32 hours, at

one site, per week. Seasonal or temporary employments are not acceptable nor are consultant or other types of preceptors.

2. Are you available to provide full-time supervision and instruction to the student? Remember, this is a learning experience for the student and you will need to give ample time and guidance to allow the student to become familiar with job tasks.

3. Do you have a structured internship/field placement procedure? Is your program based on the therapeutic recreation process that provides the student the opportunity to gain experience in ALL of the ten categories identified in the NCTRC National Job Analysis?

4. Are you actively certified as a CTRS and do you have verification in the form of NCTRC certification credentials? Plan to share a copy of your certification with the student prior to the beginning of the placement.

5. Do you keep your contact information current with the NCTRC office? This is necessary in order to complete the field placement verification process.

Serving as a field placement supervisor can be a very enriching experience that is beneficial to the student and agency. Supervision is also a great responsibility that begins before the student arrives and may last long after the student has left. If you decide to participate in field placement, do your part and assure that the experience meets the requirements for NCTRC professional eligibility.

Function of the Standards Review Committee

Matt Gold, CTRS, Chair, Standards Review Committee

The Standards Review Committee (SRC) is one of the standing committees charged with enforcing NCTRC Certification Standards. The committee is comprised of three (3) CTRSs, all serving three-year terms and all appointed by the Board of Directors of NCTRC. The two major areas of focus for SRC are New Applicant Appeals and Violation of Standards.

New Application Appeals

If an application for Professional Eligibility is denied by NCTRC staff, the applicant may appeal the decision to SRC. The major areas for denial (for those applying via the Academic Path) are often a lack of academic preparation, degree confirmation, or an inadequate field placement experience. Some applicants are denied simply because they checked "never" to one of the areas of the Job Analysis (on the Field Placement Experience page of the application). A number of applicants do not meet the standard for Human Growth and Development, because the course they took does not address

development *across the lifespan*. Other applicants are denied because of an inadequate number of hours or weeks of internship.

An appeal to SRC should include additional documentation that did not appear in the original application. This might be a course outline, a field placement log, or a letter of clarification from a professor or field placement supervisor. Based on this added information, SRC may overturn the denial decision and award professional eligibility. The applicant would then be allowed to register for the certification exam.

Violation of Standards

The most common violations of certification standards involve misrepresentation of NCTRC certification and the failure to notify NCTRC of sanctions, suspensions or limitations imposed by an agency. If a CTRS is sanctioned by his/her agency, it is the responsibility of the CTRS to notify NCTRC in a timely manner.

Other grounds for issuing sanctions include substance abuse that impairs clinical practice, or conviction of a misdemeanor or felony relating to therapeutic recreation practice. NCTRC recently added a "misconduct standard" into its *Grounds for Issuing Sanctions* standards. Under the expanded coverage, "gross or repeated negligence, malpractice or misconduct as evidenced by a clear violation of the ethical guidelines of the profession (as referenced in NTRS or ATRA Code of Ethics publications)" could lead to a sanction being imposed. Sanctions could be as mild as a reprimand or as severe as revocation of certification. Corrective action such as courses and seminars or counseling could be imposed as well.

The proper role of the TR professional is to self-monitor his or her own ethical behavior and that of other professionals around them. Please adhere to the guiding principles of ethical behavior and report all violations to NCTRC in a timely and appropriate manner.

Research at a Glance-Professional Preparation in Therapeutic Recreation

NCTRC recently prepared a research report for presentation at the Therapeutic Recreation Education Conference (TREC) held May 2005 in Itasca, IL. The conference was sponsored by the Alliance for Therapeutic Recreation and was a joint effort of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association and the National Therapeutic Recreation Society.

The purpose of this paper was to provide a summary report of the current status of professional preparation within the field of TR from a NCTRC data perspective. The report contained a variety of findings gleaned from several data sources. The central data source was the pool of graduates who applied for NCTRC certification during the years 2002-2004 and who graduated between 2000 and 2003. A full version of the paper may be viewed by visiting: www.atra-tr.org.

The graphs below illustrate some of the study findings pertaining to TR Internships.

Table 1: Applicants Field Placement Setting (N=566)

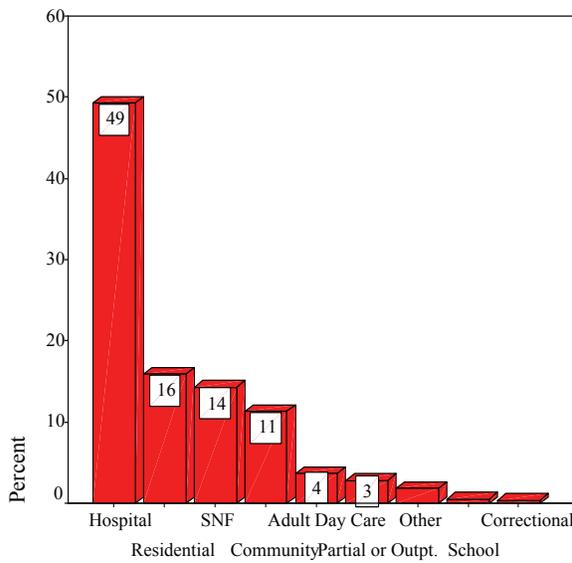


Table 2: Applicants Field Placement Population (N=566)

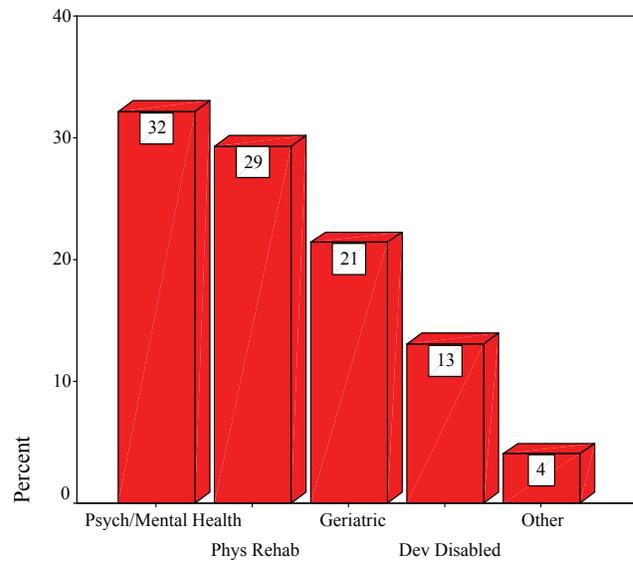


Table 3: Applicants Field Placement Age Group (N=566)

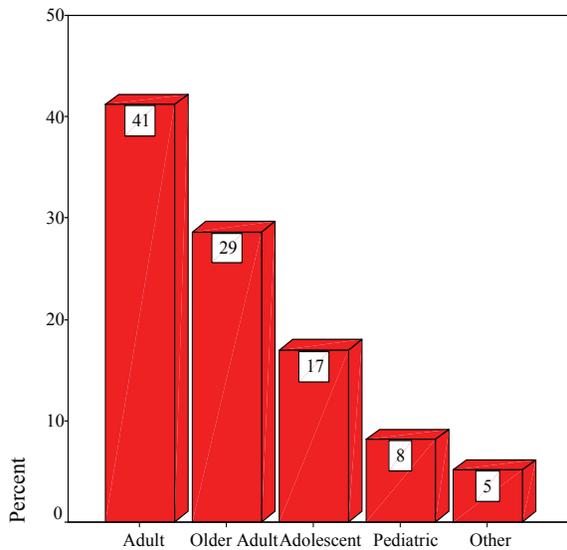
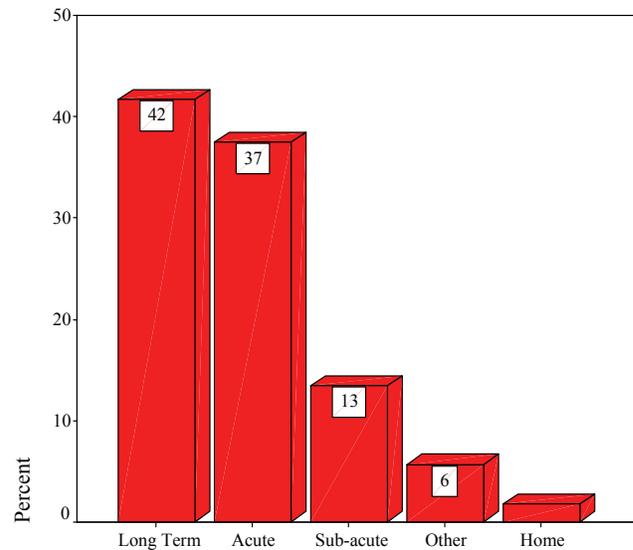


Table 4: Applicants Field Placement Level of Care (N=566)



Recertification Process Simplified!

November 1st is just around the corner, and for many of you (thousands actually!) it is time to submit your Recertification Application. Here at the NCTRC office we know that this is a time of high anxiety, as we handle daily calls from those individuals who fear and dread the Recertification process, filling out the application and gathering together the continuing education documents collected over 5 years. Well, fear no more! **NCTRC is announcing a new, streamlined process for Recertification.** The Recertification Application will no longer require a listing of educational sessions attended. You will **NOT** be required to

submit your continuing education material (CEU documents, academic transcripts, certificates of attendance) unless you are randomly selected for the audit process, and notified via postal mail from the NCTRC office. If you are selected for an audit, only then will you need to submit your continuing education materials within 30 days of notification. Please review this change in the 'NCTRC Standards Changes' section of this newsletter. Interested in submitting your Recertification Application on-line? Visit www.NCTRC.org for complete directions.

NCTRC Announces New Website Developments

NCTRC is pleased to announce the renovation of its website. Significant changes to the website allow for navigating to be easier and a lot more enjoyable. There are guidelines to make sure you are in the right place and are accessing the appropriate NCTRC documents. Here are some of the new features:

- A completely new design and great pictures of Recreation Therapy in action.
- Helpful Frequently Asked Questions button to answer important questions you may have concerning NCTRC.
- Easily accessible application forms for Professional Eligibility, Annual Maintenance and Recertification.
- And there is so much more...

One of the most exciting developments on our website is the upcoming INTERACTIVE NCTRC. That's right, soon you will be able to log-in to the website and review your current NCTRC status, access appropriate forms and be able to complete forms right on the website!!! Not only that, you will be able to pay online. If you are interested in taking the NCTRC exam, renewing your CTRS credential, or recertifying after 5 years, you will be able to do all of this at the new NCTRC website. Please visit the NCTRC website at www.NCTRC.org for additional information regarding these exciting developments. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please email us at nctrc@nctrc.org.

A Call for NCTRC Leadership

Janet Connolly, CTRS

NCTRC Board of Directors

The NCTRC Nominations and Elections Committee is currently developing a list of certificants who are interested in being considered for the 2007-2010 Board. Individuals interested in serving on standing committees are needed as well. The NCTRC Board of Directors is comprised of nine positions. Seven positions are determined by election and two positions (consumer representative and practitioner representative) are appointed by the NCTRC Chair. Each member of the Board must be willing to commit to a three (3) year term that includes two annual three-day meetings as well as several conference calls throughout the year. Board members are not permitted to hold officer level positions with other organizations that could be potentially in a conflict of interest with NCTRC.

If you or someone you know is interested in being considered for a Board or committee nomination please forward the name to the Elections Committee via phone or email. If you have any questions, please contact Janet Connolly, at (860) 693-8544, or JEConnolly54@aol.com; or Bob Riley, at (845) 639-1439, or briley@nctrc.org.

2005 Annual Certificants Meeting

Each year, NCTRC conducts its Annual Meeting for CTRSs at the professional conferences of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) and the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS). The official meeting this year will be held in San Antonio, TX at the 2005 NTRS/NRPA Conference. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Convention Center on Friday, October 21, 2005 and will start at 12:00pm. NCTRC will also sponsor a meeting for CTRSs at the ATRA Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. The meeting will be held at the Marriott Hotel, Saturday, October 8, 2005 and will start at 5:30pm.

The NCTRC Annual Meeting of Certificants is a valuable opportunity for NCTRC to share information regarding current activities and introduce the Board of Directors, Committees, and Staff. NCTRC has several exciting projects underway that we look forward to sharing with you. We hope that you will attend the meeting at either conference site. Please share this meeting information with other CTRSs who may be planning to attend the NTRS or ATRA conferences. If you are unable to attend, please contact NCTRC with any concerns or suggestions you may have about your CTRS credential.

Expert Volunteers Needed to Conduct New Job Analysis Study

In an effort to maintain the validity and integrity of its certification exam program, NCTRC will conduct a new Job Analysis study in 2006. The establishment of a current Job Analysis (JA) is essential to the valid operation of a credentialing program and serves as the blueprint for future exam development and item writing. NCTRC has completed two previous Job Analysis studies in 1987 and in 1997.

The Job Analysis translates practice into a format for test development. A well constructed JA ensures that a certification test is job related and reflects current practice in the field. The specific types of information collected via the JA study would include the important tasks, knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice. The Job Analysis is also very useful to gather information that can inform continuing education and professional development efforts.

A well-designed Job Analysis should be representative of the diversity of service within TR practice. The JA process is enhanced by the participation of large numbers of subject-matter experts (SME). NCTRC is actively recruiting SME to serve as volunteer members of various advisory committees critical to completing the various stages of the JA. While the main criterion in the selection of individuals to serve as SME is their knowledge of the TR process, personal demographic profile factors will also be considered, including level of experience, gender, race/ethnicity and geographic location.

NCTRC is seeking 40 CTRS volunteers to serve as SME for the upcoming JA project

Volunteer Job Analysis Committees

The JA study is a very complex process that requires the involvement of volunteer CTRSs to serve as SME. In order to complete the JA Study in a timely manner, four (4) distinct committees have been identified involving the volunteer SME. The specific committees and timetable of involvement are described as follows:

1. **SME Interview Committee (10):** serve as a reviewer of existing information pertaining to the scope and practice of therapeutic recreation. Committee members will be interviewed by JA staff to determine the level of support for current job roles and practices in TR. The purpose of the interview is to create a preliminary list of task and knowledge areas for therapeutic recreation practice (March 2006).
2. **JA Task Force Committee (12-15):** serve as SME to review and revise the list of tasks and knowledge areas for competent practice in TR. The JA Task Force Committee will also participate in the review of the JA survey instrument. This committee will participate in a meeting in Princeton, NJ in May of 2006. (All expenses paid by NCTRC).
3. **JA Pilot Survey Committee (10):** serve as a reviewer of the pilot JA survey. A copy of the survey will be mailed to each committee member for the purpose of ensuring that the instrument is clear, easy to follow, and reflective of TR practice (July 2006).
4. **JA Test Specification Committee (5-7):** serve as a member of the committee that will review the results of the JA survey and convert findings into the test specifications for the NCTRC Exam. This process will involve a two-day meeting to be held in Princeton, NJ in November 2006. (All expenses paid by NCTRC).

Please contact NCTRC if you wish to nominate yourself or another CTRS to serve as SME for one of the JA committees listed above. Minimum criteria would include active CTRS status and at least 3 years of practical experience in TR. Please send a letter of interest and a current resume to:

JA Committee Nominations
NCTRC
7 Elmwood Dr.
New City, NY 10956

Please contact NCTRC via phone (845-639-1439) or e-mail (nctrc@nctrc.org) regarding any specific questions that you may have pertaining to the Job Analysis study.

NCTRC Certification Standards: Changes, Updates and Effective Dates

The NCTRC Certification Standards serve as the official guidelines for test eligibility status and govern all requirements pertaining to certification and recertification. It is the policy of the NCTRC Board of Directors to post notice of all standard changes well in advance to effective dates. **The NCTRC Board of Directors has approved the following changes to the Certification Standards.**

1. Recertification Review Procedures change

Effective Date: April 2005

The standard requiring continuing education materials to be submitted with the recertification application reads as follows:

*“Upon receipt of the recertification application, NCTRC will select at random a percentage of applications for audit. The purpose of the audit is to verify the completion of all continuing education hours listed on the recertification application. Certificants who are selected for audit will be directly notified by NCTRC via postal mail. Certificants will have 30 days to submit their continuing education materials for the audit process. Failure to submit the continuing education materials in a timely manner will result in a denial of recertification. **If you are not selected for audit, you will not need to submit your continuing education documents.**”*

2. Publications for continuing education credit: Change in the credits awarded

Effective Date: April 2005

The standard pertaining to the publication credits awarded reads as follows:

“Published editor of a professional book or professional journal: 15 pts

Editorial review of professional journal article: 5 pts.”

3. Eligibility Interpretative Guideline Change: Academic Major

Effective Date: June 2005

The standard pertaining to the required academic major reads as follows:

“Only the following officially designated majors appearing on the

transcript will be accepted for academic path applications: (a) therapeutic recreation (recreation therapy); (b) recreation or leisure with an option in therapeutic recreation; and (c) therapeutic recreation, recreation, or leisure in combination with other fields of study (e.g., Therapeutic Recreation and Health Studies; Recreation and Sport Management; Leisure and Tourism).”

4. Supportive Course Requirement: Anatomy & Physiology Requirement

Effective Date: June 2005

The standard pertaining to the Anatomy & Physiology requirement reads as follows:

“A course that is intended to serve as an entry-level Human Biology course does not meet the NCTRC Anatomy and Physiology requirement.”

5. Professional Eligibility Reinstatement Policy

Effective Date: August 2005

The standard pertaining to the professional eligibility policy reads as follows:

“The Professional Eligibility Annual Maintenance Application and fee must be postmarked to NCTRC by the required issued date (May 1 or November 1) or the professional eligibility will become inactive. Applicants with inactive status will need to reinstate their professional eligibility prior to registering for the NCTRC exam. Reinstatement to active professional eligibility status can be achieved at any time during the five-year professional eligibility cycle by paying the current reinstatement fee plus any delinquent annual maintenance fees. Reinstatement to active status may not occur following expiration of the five-year eligibility cycle.”

6. Examination Information: Identification Requirements

Effective Date: August 2005

The standard pertaining to the exam identification requirements reads as follows:

“When you arrive at the test center, you will be required to present your ATT and one form of valid, government issued

photo and signature bearing identification. Acceptable forms of identification (which must include your signature and photograph) are: current (valid) driver's license, employee identification card, state identification card, or a current (valid) passport.”

7. Content Course Requirement: Increase the Required Number of TR Content Coursework to Four Courses

Effective Date: December 31, 2007

The standard pertaining to the required number of therapeutic recreation content courses will read as follows:

Academic Path

“A minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter credit hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter credit hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of 4 courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of 3 credit hours; AND...”

Equivalency Path A & B

“A minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter credit hours of upper division or graduate level therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter credit hours in upper division or graduate level therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of 4 courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of 3 credit hours; AND...”

8. Content Course Requirement Increase in Required Number of Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses Completed Prior to Field Placement

Effective Date: December 31, 2007

The standard requiring the majority of TR coursework to be completed prior to the field placement will read as follows:

“The number of required therapeutic recreation content courses that must be completed prior to the field placement is 9 semester or 12 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content coursework.”

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*NOTE: All terms of office, in
parenthesis after each name,
begin and end in April of the
given year.*

*All correspondence to any
member of the NCTRC Board,
Committees or Staff should be
mailed to:*

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nctrc@nctrc.org