



January 2018

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*National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC®)*

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**Information for the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®  
And New Applicants**

Certification Standards

**Part I: Information for  
New Applicants**



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The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®, NCTRC® and the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist® (CTRS®) credential are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

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## Preface

This booklet is from the complete *NCTRC Certification Standards: Part I- Information for New Applicants*. Materials included focus on the Prerequisites for Certification, Eligibility Requirements and Exam Information.

There are four other booklets which make up the complete set of *NCTRC Certification Standards*. The booklets were created to provide specific information for various users of the NCTRC Certification Standards. The other parts are:

- ❑ **Part II: Exam Information**
- ❑ **Part III: Recertification and Reentry**
- ❑ **Part IV: NCTRC Disciplinary Standards and Process**
- ❑ **Part V: NCTRC National Job Analysis**

All candidates for NCTRC certification and CTRS certificants are responsible for reading and understanding the complete *NCTRC Certification Standards*. These booklets were designed as an additional aide to specific areas of standards and application processes.

NCTRC's Certification Standards are updated periodically. Candidates are responsible for making sure they have the most current information and that they meet the current standards when they apply for certification. The most current *NCTRC Certification Standards* can be found at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org). **The date of this publication is January 2018.**

## NCTRC NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of NCTRC, its Board of Directors, committee members, and staff to comply with all applicable laws, which prohibit discrimination in employment or service provision because of a person's race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, national origin, or because of any other protected characteristic.

## NCTRC TRADEMARK NOTICE

"NCTRC®", "National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®", "CTRS®", and "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®" are the registered trademarks of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. Unauthorized use of any NCTRC trademark or confusingly similar mark is strictly prohibited.

NCTRC does not warrant or guarantee the provision of competent services by CTRSs; NCTRC certification helps to demonstrate the certificant has met the entry-level requirements for the profession.

## NCTRC CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

NCTRC does not release names and contact information on record to individuals and/or organizations for educational and/or research purposes without the expressed written permission of the applicant/certificant.

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## Introduction

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The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC®) encourages applications from all qualified individuals interested in becoming a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. While NCTRC cannot warrant an individual’s abilities in professional practice, certification will help identify the individual who possesses the necessary entry-level knowledge for competent practice in therapeutic recreation.

Please read this booklet of *NCTRC Certification Standards* thoroughly. If you have any questions about the NCTRC certification process or the information contained in the *NCTRC Certification Standards*, please contact NCTRC at (845) 639-1439. NCTRC’s national office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time. Internet access is available at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org) or send an email to [nctrc@NCTRC.org](mailto:nctrc@NCTRC.org).

### Application Deadlines:

Applications for Professional Eligibility are accepted throughout the year. There are however, deadlines for filing applications for Professional Eligibility before each exam. The NCTRC Exam is offered six times throughout the year utilizing a two-week testing window for each exam administration. Please check online at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org) for the most current information regarding Exam Application Deadlines/Fees.

Applicants must gain NCTRC eligibility to be seated for the NCTRC exam. Eligibility is valid for five years from the date of issue provided the individual files an annual maintenance application and fee. The Professional Eligibility Annual Maintenance Application and fee must be submitted to NCTRC by the required expiration date 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. Professionally eligible applicants must pass the exam to receive the CTRS credential.

Please submit a completed application appropriate to your eligibility path within the designated application window in order to be reviewed for a requested exam. If your application is incomplete it will be denied and your requested test date may be postponed. All materials submitted to NCTRC as part of the Professional Eligibility Application process will become the property of NCTRC.

Please keep contact information current throughout your application process. You may update your contact information by logging into your profile at MY NCTRC LOGIN or you may email your requested changes to [nctrc@nctrc.org](mailto:nctrc@nctrc.org).

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## Prerequisites

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### GENERAL

NCTRC's voluntary credentialing program evaluates the educational and experiential qualifications of therapeutic recreation professionals. As a condition of eligibility for NCTRC certification and recertification, each candidate agrees to the following:

- **To Comply with ALL NCTRC Standards, Policies and Procedures.** NCTRC may deny certification or recertification, revoke certification or recertification, or issue other sanctions when a candidate does not comply with any of NCTRC's *Certification Standards* including these *Prerequisites*.
- **To Adhere to NCTRC Application and Notification Requirements.** Each candidate for CTRS certification must truthfully complete and sign the appropriate application provided by NCTRC. Candidates and certificants must notify NCTRC in writing within sixty (60) days of any change in name, address, telephone number, and any facts bearing on eligibility, certification, recertification, or reentry. Each individual bears the burden of showing and maintaining compliance at all times. Candidates and certificants must provide NCTRC with confirmation of compliance with NCTRC requirements as requested by NCTRC. In order to confirm receipt of communication required by NCTRC, candidates should upload the requested information to their profile at MY NCTRC LOGIN, or use a verifiable method of delivery for communications to NCTRC.
- **To Report Pending Litigation, Sanctions, and/or Criminal Convictions.** Candidates must notify NCTRC within sixty (60) days of any civil or criminal indictment or charge pending before a state or federal regulatory agency or judicial body, including but not limited to the following actions to the extent such actions relate to therapeutic recreation or public health and safety: investigation of any civil or criminal action; filing of any civil or criminal charge; indictment or litigation; conviction; plea of guilty; plea of no contest (*nolo contendere*); or investigation or disciplinary action by a health care organization, professional organization, or other private or governmental body.
- **To Respect the Property of NCTRC.** The examinations, certificates, logo, emblem, and the name "National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification," the designation "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist," and abbreviations relating thereto are all the exclusive property of NCTRC and may not be used in any way without the express prior written consent of NCTRC. In the event of suspension, limitation, revocation, or resignation from NCTRC, or as otherwise requested by NCTRC, each individual shall immediately relinquish, refrain from using, and correct at his or her expense any outdated or other inaccurate use of NCTRC's certificate, logo, emblem, the name "NCTRC," the designation "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist," "CTRS," and related abbreviations.
- **To Authorize the Release of Information by NCTRC.** The candidate or certificant agrees that NCTRC and its officers, directors, committee members, employees, agents, and others may communicate any and all information relating to the candidate's application, certification, and review thereof including, but not limited to, pendency or findings of violations of NCTRC's *Certification Standards*, to state and federal authorities, licensing boards, employers, other certificants, and others.
- **To Waive Claims Against NCTRC.** Each candidate and certificant agrees that he or she waives, releases, discharges, and exonerates NCTRC, its officers, directors, employees, committee members, panel members and agents, and any other persons authorized by NCTRC for any action taken pursuant to the NCTRC *Certification Standards* and policies and procedures from any and all claims or liability, including, but not limited to, claims or liability arising out of: (i) the furnishing or inspection of documents, records and other information; and (ii) any investigation, review, or decision regarding an application or certification made by NCTRC.

### Grounds for Issuing Sanctions

NCTRC may deny certification or recertification, revoke certification or recertification, or issue other sanctions when a candidate does not comply with any of the following:

1. Ineligibility for NCTRC certification. Ineligibility includes, but is not limited to, a failure to meet any certification standard set by NCTRC;
2. Irregularity in connection with any NCTRC exam. This includes, but is not limited to, copying answers, permitting another to copy answers, falsifying information required for admission to exam, impersonating another examinee, falsifying education or credentials, or providing and/or receiving unauthorized advice about exam content before, during, or following the exam;
3. Unauthorized possession of, use of, distribution of, or access to (i) NCTRC exams, (ii) certificates, (iii) logo of NCTRC, (iv) NCTRC trademarks and abbreviations relating thereto, and (v) any other NCTRC documents and materials;
4. Obtaining or attempting to obtain certification or recertification for oneself or another by a false or misleading statement or failure to make a required statement, fraud or deceit in an application, reapplication or any other communication to NCTRC;
5. Misrepresentation of NCTRC certification;

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6. Failure to provide any written information required by NCTRC;
  7. Failure to provide timely update of information required by NCTRC;
  8. Habitual use of alcohol or any drug or any substance, or any physical or mental condition which impairs competent and objective professional performance;
  9. Gross or repeated negligence, malpractice or misconduct;
  10. Violation of the ethical guidelines of the profession (as referenced in published codes and guidelines);
  11. Limitation or sanction, including but not limited to revocation or suspension by a health care organization, professional organization, or other private or governmental body relating to therapeutic recreation practice, public health or safety or therapeutic recreation certification;
  12. Conviction of, plea of guilty to, or plea of *no contest (nolo contendere)* to a felony or misdemeanor directly relating to therapeutic recreation practice and/or public health and safety. A candidate convicted of a felony directly related to therapeutic recreation practice and/or public health and safety shall be ineligible to apply for certification or recertification for a period of three (3) years from the exhaustion of appeals, completion of probation or final release from confinement (if any), whichever is later. Convictions of this nature include but are not limited to felonies involving rape, abuse of a patient or child, actual or threatened use of a weapon, violence, and prohibited sale, distribution or possession of a controlled substance.
  13. Knowingly assisting another to obtain or attempt to obtain credentialing by fraud or deception.
  14. Any other violation of NCTRC Bylaws, *Certification Standards*, policy or procedure, or any other rule, standard or procedure as may be adopted by NCTRC.

The enumeration of the forgoing is not exclusive and other acts or omissions amounting to unprofessional conduct may constitute grounds to deny certification or recertification, revoke certification or recertification or issue other sanctions.

NCTRC may also deny, revoke, suspend, or deem inactive the certification or recertification of any individual who has failed to pay fees required by NCTRC. A failure to pay fees required by NCTRC may result in administrative action, not governed by the procedures found in these Prerequisites. NCTRC fees are established by the Board of Directors and may be changed without prior notice.

#### **ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF NCTRC STANDARDS**

Alleged violations of NCTRC's Certification Standards must be submitted in writing to the NCTRC Executive Director and should identify the person(s) alleged to be involved and the facts concerning the alleged conduct in as much detail and specificity as possible. The allegations should identify by name, address and telephone number the person making the information known to NCTRC and others who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances concerning the alleged conduct.

Available documentation should also be provided to the Executive Director and the Executive Director may request additional information relating to the content or form of the allegations. If the Executive Director determines that the allegations are frivolous or fail to state a violation of NCTRC's Certification Standards, the Executive Director shall take no further action and so apprise the Board and the complainant, if any. If the Executive Director has good cause to believe that a ground for issuing sanctions may exist, the Executive Director shall transmit the allegations to the Standards Review Committee. All NCTRC certification records and the investigations of alleged violations of the NCTRC Certification Standards are kept confidential.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION OF VIOLATIONS OF NCTRC STANDARDS**

The Executive Director may deny certification or recertification or withhold permission to sit for the exam when NCTRC Certification Standards have not been met. The Executive Director shall investigate possible violations of NCTRC's Certification Standards and may request additional information or documentation. If an application for certification, renewal, recertification, or reentry is pending at the time a violation is alleged, review of the application by staff shall be suspended until the Standards Review Committee completes its review of the alleged violation. Similarly, during any appeal to NCTRC, if there appears to be grounds for issuing sanctions the appeal shall be suspended until the Standards Review Committee completes its review of the alleged violation. Suspended applications (or appeals) shall remain suspended until the deciding Committee has authorized further action on the application (or appeal), or until expiration of what would have been the individual's period of eligibility or certification cycle. If a suspension expires, the individual must reapply, under the then existing standards and will reinitiate the disciplinary process (e.g., the application review is suspended until a deciding Committee has authorized further action). At anytime during the review of an alleged violation of NCTRC's Certification Standards, the Executive Director, the Standards Review Committee, the Standards Hearing Committee, and NCTRC may consult with NCTRC legal counsel.

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## SANCTIONS

Sanctions for violation of any NCTRC Certification Standards or any other NCTRC standard, policy, or procedure may include one or more of the following:

1. Denial or suspension of eligibility;
2. Revocation of certification;
3. Non-renewal of certification;
4. Reprimand;
5. Suspension of certification; and/or
6. Other corrective action

## Eligibility

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NCTRC's Certification Standards are updated periodically. Candidates are responsible for making sure they have the most current information and that they meet the current standards when they apply for certification. The most current NCTRC Certification Standards can be found at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org).

### OVERVIEW

To be awarded the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential, the candidate must meet eligibility requirements and pass a knowledge-based exam. When the candidate is awarded the CTRS credential, it is evidence that the individual, through education and experience, has met the *NCTRC Certification Standards*. The award of the CTRS credential is a limited license to use the titles "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist<sup>®</sup>" and "CTRS<sup>®</sup>" subject to *NCTRC Certification Standards*.

Candidates are eligible to register for the NCTRC certification exam if they are in compliance with *NCTRC Certification Standards*, including the *Prerequisites*, and they have been found by NCTRC to meet all professional eligibility requirements through either the academic or equivalency path.

### PATHS TO PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AS A CTRS

There are two paths to professional certification as a CTRS: the academic path and the equivalency path. Both paths are defined below. The academic path is for individuals who have completed a baccalaureate degree or higher with a major in therapeutic recreation or a major in recreation or leisure with an option in therapeutic recreation. The equivalency path is for individuals with an earned baccalaureate degree or higher degree in any major area. Both certification paths have requirements related to: an academic degree at the bachelors level or higher, content coursework in therapeutic recreation and general recreation, supportive coursework, and experience in therapeutic recreation practice. Interpretive guidelines immediately follow the description of certification requirements for each path.

NCTRC offers a pre-approval process for coursework prior to the submission of a formal application. NCTRC's Pre-Application Coursework Review Process allows potential applicants to determine whether they meet current certification coursework requirements before submitting a formal application. This process will allow for early confirmation of coursework to individuals who are not certain if previously completed coursework will count towards NCTRC eligibility requirements. The application form is available at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org) under New Applicants.

### **Academic Path**

The Academic Path eligibility requirements to take the CTRS exam are a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university with a major in therapeutic recreation or a major in recreation or leisure with an option in therapeutic recreation. An official transcript must be submitted with application and verify the degree, major and coursework.

A "major in therapeutic recreation" or "major in recreation with an option in therapeutic recreation" refers to the completion of a degree which includes the following:

1. A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester or 20 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required therapeutic recreation courses may be taught by the applicant as a full-time educator.  
*[Note: A change in this standard will go into effect 1/1/22. See Standards Changes page 33 for details.]*  
Content specific therapeutic recreation coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility.
2. Supportive courses to include a total of 18 semester hours or 24 quarter hours of support coursework with a minimum

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of: (i) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of anatomy and physiology; (ii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of abnormal psychology; and (iii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of human growth and development across the lifespan. The remaining semester hours or quarter hours of coursework must be fulfilled in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.

3. A minimum 560-hour, 14 consecutive week internship experience in therapeutic recreation services that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study under the supervision of both academic and agency internship supervisors who are NCTRC CTRS certified. An acceptable internship experience is one which is completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed as verified on the official transcript.

### **Academic Path – Application prior to degree completion**

Applicants may apply for professional eligibility review after completion of the following conditions:

1. Enrollment in a degree program pertaining to Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy as defined by the current NCTRC standards.
2. Completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours toward degree attainment.
3. Completion of all required coursework other than the internship requirement, as defined by the current NCTRC standards.
4. Submission of an official academic transcript denoting the completion of the above requirements.

Applicants completing this option of the Academic Path application process will be awarded NCTRC certification and the CTRS certificate upon demonstration of the following:

1. Successful completion of the NCTRC exam.
2. Completion of an internship experience in accordance with NCTRC Standards.
3. Academic degree attainment as documented by an official academic transcript.

### **EQUIVALENCY PATH REQUIREMENTS**

Equivalency refers to an alternate route to certification based upon specific academic preparation and full-time, paid work experience. There are two equivalency paths to professional eligibility with NCTRC: Equivalency Path A and Equivalency Path B. Work experience in therapeutic recreation cannot be substituted for the internship experience requirements under the academic path. However, under both equivalency paths, full-time paid work experience is required instead of an academic internship experience. Under Equivalency Path A, five (5) years of full-time paid work experience is required. Applicants who possess a graduate degree in therapeutic recreation need a minimum of three (3) years of full-time paid experience in therapeutic recreation services. Under Equivalency Path B, one (1) year of full-time paid work experience under the supervision of a CTRS is required. In order for full-time work experience to be accepted under the equivalency paths, the job title and duties must be full-time in therapeutic recreation as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis. Full-time work experience is defined as between 30 to 40 hours per week. Part-time work experience in a permanent employment position in therapeutic recreation practice will be accepted as long as it is between 20 to 29 hours per week. If the part-time experience is ruled to be acceptable under the equivalency paths, it will be prorated. Seasonal, temporary, and/or consulting experience will not be accepted as full-time or permanent part-time work experience.

The eligibility requirements for both equivalency paths are provided below.

### **Equivalency Path A**

The eligibility requirements to take the CTRS exam are a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university verified by an official transcript and the following:

1. A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester or 20 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required therapeutic recreation courses may be taught by the applicant as a full-time educator.

***[Note: A change in this standard will go into effect 1/1/22. See Standards Changes page 33 for details.]***

Content specific therapeutic recreation coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility.

2. Supportive courses to include a minimum of 24 semester hours or 32 quarter hours in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.
3. A minimum of five (5) years of full-time paid work experience in therapeutic recreation services that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis. Applicants who possess a graduate degree in therapeutic recreation need a minimum of three (3) years of full-time paid work experience in therapeutic recreation

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services that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis.

## Equivalency Path B

The eligibility requirements to take the CTRS examination are a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university verified by an official transcript and the following:

1. A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester or 20 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required therapeutic recreation courses may be taught by the applicant as a full-time educator.  
*[Note: A change in this standard will go into effect 1/1/22. See Standards Changes page 33 for details.]*  
Content specific therapeutic recreation coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility.
2. Supportive courses to include a total of 18 semester hours or 24 quarter hours of support coursework with a minimum of: (i) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of anatomy and physiology; (ii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of abnormal psychology; and (iii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of human growth and development across the lifespan. The remaining semester hours or quarter hours of coursework must be fulfilled in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.
3. A minimum of one (1) year full-time, paid work experience in therapeutic recreation services under the supervision of a CTRS that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUIVALENCY PATH B:**

- Required work experience in therapeutic recreation must occur in the 5 years before application.
- Credit will not be given for administrative or consultant work, which does not include direct client services.
- One-year full-time experience is defined as a minimum of 1500 hours worked (excludes scheduled and unscheduled leave time) within a minimum of a full calendar year (52 weeks). The 1500 hour number is determined from calculating full-time as a minimum of 30 hours per week over 46 weeks. 46 weeks is determined by subtracting potential vacation, holiday and leave time from 52 weeks in a year.
- A minimum of 30 hours per week will be considered full-time status. Part-time employment of no less than 20 hours per week will be pro-rated to full-time equivalent up to the minimum of 1500 hours of employment.
- The supervisor must hold an active CTRS credential throughout the period of supervision and the supervisor may be either: Employed on-site with direct supervisory responsibility for the applicant (direct supervisory responsibilities refer to having primary responsibility for the applicant's performance evaluation, clinical and/or managerial supervision); or a preceptor or consultant to the agency and applicant. The preceptor/consultant must provide on-site supervision of the applicant for a minimum of one hour for every 10 hours of the applicant's employment for a minimum of 150 hours within the calendar year of supervision. Supervision must include direct observation of practice as well as supervisory meetings. While onsite or direct supervision is strongly encouraged, NCTRC recognizes there may be applicants who are unable to receive onsite supervision with a CTRS. With current technology, there may be alternative effective models of supervision.
- The CTRS supervisor must complete a formal evaluation provided by NCTRC.

## Standards Changes

CTRS Certification Standards, including examination eligibility standards are periodically evaluated and revised based on data from the most current Job Analysis, applications submitted and exam pass rates. A change in the NCTRC Certification Standards, which enables more people to become certified, is implemented immediately. A change in the Certification Standards which makes it more difficult to attain certification is announced two years prior to being implemented in the certification review process. A change in the Certification Standards which directly affects university curricula (i.e., course or curricula structure) is announced four years prior to being implemented in the certification review process.



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## Interpretative Guidelines

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- **Academic Major:** NCTRC will only accept a degree and major as officially written on the academic transcript. 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; (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); and (d) a major in another field of study with a concentration/emphasis/sub-plan/option in recreation therapy/therapeutic recreation.
- **Accredited:** Refers to a college or university, which is accredited by a regional accrediting agency (e.g., North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools). NCTRC does not require applicants to graduate from an NRPA/AALR accredited recreation or therapeutic recreation program.
- **Completion of Academic Degree:** Graduation as documented and dated on the official transcript.
- **Courses Can Be Combined From Various Degrees (baccalaureate, master's or doctorate):** Courses taken for the baccalaureate degree or higher can be counted toward certification requirements provided the courses meet all other requirements as defined in these guidelines.
- **Official Transcript:** An official transcript is a legal document issued by a university or college registrar that contains documentation of completed coursework and degree confirmation. The official transcript needs to contain the date of issue and the signature or seal of the registrar. NCTRC accepts both printed and electronic copies of an original academic transcript. However, electronic transcripts need to be sent directly to NCTRC from the registrar's office. Official printed transcripts issued to students (Student Copy) are acceptable. NCTRC does not accept photocopies of transcripts. Transcripts are not accepted if previously marked or altered in any manner.
- **Content Course:** Is generally interpreted as having a theoretical and/or philosophical focus of study. Skill, activity, practicum, or internship courses do not fulfill the requirements for content courses.
- **Content Course Prefix:** Content courses in therapeutic recreation and general recreation must appear on the official transcript under a consistent prefix (e.g., REC, LEIS, etc.) representative of the college/university department, program, or unit offering the academic major in therapeutic recreation or recreation/leisure. Content courses listed under the prefix of departments, programs, or units of study not offering the major in therapeutic recreation or recreation/leisure will not be accepted.
- **Independent Study Courses:** Must meet the same requirements of content courses described above. All independent study courses submitted for evaluation as meeting certification requirements must be verified by an official course outline or syllabus delineating course title, purpose, objectives and topic areas studied. The course number on the outline or syllabus must correspond to the Independent Study number listed on the transcript. The outline or syllabus for Independent Study courses must be submitted with certification application materials for such courses to be considered as content courses in the certification evaluation process.
- **Thesis or Dissertation Coursework:** Must meet the same requirements of content courses as described above. A total of one (1) course and three (3) credits will be awarded for thesis or dissertation coursework in TR/RT as applied to the content coursework requirement. Thesis or dissertation coursework submitted for evaluation as meeting certification requirements must be verified by an official course outline or syllabus delineating course title, purpose, objectives and topic areas studied. In addition to a course outline or syllabus, a signed thesis or dissertation proposal will also be accepted. The course number on the outline or syllabus must correspond to the course number listed on the transcript. The outline, syllabus, or proposal for thesis or dissertation credit must be submitted with the certification application materials for such courses to be considered as content courses in the certification evaluation process.
- **Self-Taught Courses:** Applicants applying for professional eligibility can receive credit for up to two courses (6 credits) that they have taught as a full-time faculty member. However, self-enrolled coursework is not accepted toward certification or recertification requirements (i.e., individuals may not enroll in their own courses to meet certification or recertification requirements).
- **Semester and Quarter Unit Conversions:** A unit is one credit or one hour of academic study. All equations from semester to quarter units in NCTRC standards are determined by the ratio of 1 semester hour to 1.33 quarter units or 1 quarter unit to .75 semester hour.
- **Acceptable Internship Content:** Is defined by the therapeutic recreation process/practice as provided in the current NCTRC Job Analysis.
- **NCTRC Requires Verification:** NCTRC verifies all employment and internship experience as part of the application process. Internship and employment that cannot be verified are unacceptable toward certification requirements.
- **Internship Should Be Completed After Coursework:** An acceptable internship must be completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed. Verification of the completed internship must appear on the official academic transcript and the completed internship verification form. The majority of therapeutic recreation and recreation content coursework is defined as no less than 12 semester or 16 quarter hours of coursework with at least 9 semester and 12 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content coursework. This requirement applies to coursework completed at

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the degree earning institution and does not apply to coursework completed after the academic degree is conferred.

■ **Full-time Faculty Appointment in Therapeutic Recreation Education:** Must be a full-time appointment in an academic unit that offers a minimum of a Bachelors degree in therapeutic recreation, recreation therapy, or recreation with an emphasis in therapeutic recreation or recreation therapy. Multiple academic faculty appointments may be used to satisfy the coursework requirement.

■ **Required Coursework Interpretive Guideline:** All required coursework submitted for eligibility must be college-level credit bearing coursework. Each course applied toward meeting the eligibility requirements must be a graded experience. Audited courses will not be accepted as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility. NCTRC does not accept “life credit” coursework that is based upon previous life or professional experience. These requirements apply to professional level Therapeutic Recreation and Recreation coursework, required support coursework, and the internship requirement.

## Certification Review Procedures

Only professional NCTRC staff holding the CTRS designation will review certification applications to determine whether NCTRC’s CTRS certification criteria are met. At any time during the certification application review, the Executive Director may request further information from the applicant. Once review of an application is complete, the NCTRC Executive Director shall inform the applicant of either (i) the decision to grant eligibility to take the CTRS examination; or (ii) the decision to deny eligibility to take the CTRS examination, and the reasons for the denial. \* Please note: applicants who gained eligibility prior to degree confirmation will forfeit eligibility to sit for the exam if their application is denied during the certification review process and not successfully overturned during the appeal process.

## Appeals of Eligibility Denials

Upon receipt of a decision denying eligibility, an applicant has 45 days to submit an appeal application to NCTRC. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application within 45 days, the applicant forfeits any right to an appeal at a later date of the decision denying eligibility and will have to reapply as a new applicant meeting all of the current NCTRC Certification Standards. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal at this stage. Please see *New Applicant Appeals Procedures* for complete information on how and when to file an appeal application.

## Content Course Information

NCTRC requires the completion of “content coursework” for certification. A content course is generally interpreted as having a theoretical and/or philosophical focus of study. Skill, activity, practicum, or internship courses are not accepted as content courses.

The current NCTRC Job Analysis defines the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice in therapeutic recreation. The professional certification exam is based on the knowledge areas defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis. It is assumed that academic programs in therapeutic recreation prepare individuals for competent practice in the field. The coursework the student completes in a therapeutic recreation degree program should cover the necessary entry-level knowledge and skills for competent practice.

### GENERAL INFORMATION ON CONTENT COURSES

NCTRC establishes guidelines for the general acceptability of course content. In addition, a minimum number of hours are required in therapeutic recreation and general recreation courses and all courses must be identified on the applicant’s transcript as taken from a department or program of study in the field. A therapeutic recreation content course is a highly structured and university/college approved course, which focuses on the theory and/or philosophy and/or program content of the field. It is necessary for NCTRC to rely on the titles of courses in the review process. The titles of courses remain critical to identifying the nature of course content. NCTRC does not “read into” or read beyond the titles of courses. It is the university/college’s responsibility to appropriately title their courses. There is an ethical issue here as well. Course titles need to reflect the true nature of the course content. To retitle or title a course to meet certification requirements regardless of the content is indeed unethical. The more appropriate concern of academic programs should be the review of course content to assure its applicability to the state of art of practice in therapeutic recreation.

## Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses

A profession is expected to possess a commonly held body of knowledge. This body of knowledge becomes the basis for identifying those individuals who are qualified for professional recognition through credentialing. Thus, the primary focus of the term **content course** for NCTRC will be the commonly identified and supported areas of professional knowledge as defined through the current NCTRC Job Analysis. A therapeutic recreation content course is a highly structured and university/college approved course that focuses on the theory and/or philosophy and/or program content of the field. Content specific therapeutic recreation coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility. It is recommended that each content area be addressed by a specific TR course.

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### **THERAPEUTIC RECREATION COURSES THAT ARE NOT ACCEPTED:**

Some specialty areas and corresponding courses are not considered therapeutic recreation content courses within the certification plan. These courses include: (1) **A course dealing with a specific activity skill for one population;** and (2) **A course dealing with a clustered activity area for one population.**

**Rationale:** Therapeutic recreation has changed dramatically and is no longer viewed primarily as activity services for special populations. A vast array of practice responsibilities and accountability issues has become more important in the delivery of services. Courses, which remain focused on specific activities, may be important to the overall preparation of the student, but are not accepted toward the minimum content course requirements in therapeutic recreation. Thus, it is not inferred that activities are unimportant. If the activity courses exist in addition to basic therapeutic recreation knowledge courses, which address the fundamental areas of the profession, they are viewed as excellent additions to the individual's preparation.

### **General Recreation Content Courses**

Recreation content courses require some definition in view of the purpose of certification. Most students with a major in recreation, or an emphasis or option within the recreation/leisure field, complete a professional education core which is required of all students regardless of their specialty area. General recreation course requirements of NCTRC refer to just that; general and not specialty recreation areas of study.

### **GENERAL RECREATION COURSES NOT ACCEPTED:**

Some specialty areas and corresponding courses are excluded as general recreation content courses within the certification plan, including: **Any course that would be considered as an option course in any of the identified specializations.**

**Rationale:** Core leisure and recreation courses are considered as a foundation to the area of therapeutic recreation and to other specialties in the leisure field. Option or specialization courses such as those taught in the Outdoor Recreation, Resource Management, or Commercial Recreation options are considered to be too specialized to adequately prepare therapeutic recreation personnel in basic concepts of general recreation. This is particularly true if these option courses are taken instead of courses in the professional recreation core.

**Any course which is focused on a specific activity or group of activities.** Examples would include aquatics, crafts, a specific sport or cluster of sports, fitness.

**Rationale:** Knowledge and skill in a variety of activity areas are obviously important to therapeutic recreation. However, courses in these areas do not replace the need for solid knowledge and background in professional leisure and recreation theory and practice. Thus, they are excluded from consideration within the required general recreation content coursework.

### **Courses Requiring Course Outline for Review**

Some courses do not give a clear indication of content by title alone. These courses will be evaluated only if they are accompanied by an official college/university course outline (not a catalog description) at the time of application. The official course outline must be dated for the same time in which academic credit was awarded for the course on the official transcript.

### **TITLES OF COURSES WHERE OFFICIAL OUTLINES ARE REQUIRED FOR REVIEW:**

- Independent Readings
- Independent Study
- Readings courses
- Seminar courses
- Special Projects
- Special Topics
- Thesis or Dissertation

*SUMMARY:* Individuals applying for certification may submit a copy of official course outlines with their certification applications. Only those courses, which meet the requirements of a content course, as defined in this information sheet will be accepted toward certification requirements.

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## Supportive Coursework Information

NCTRC recognizes the important role of related coursework outside the fields of therapeutic recreation and general recreation as contributing to the knowledge base for practice in therapeutic recreation. NCTRC certification requires specific supportive coursework in the academic path as well as the equivalency paths.

Support coursework in the academic path and the equivalency path B standards must include a minimum of: (i) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of anatomy and physiology; (ii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of abnormal psychology; and (iii) three (3) semester hours or four (4) quarter hours coursework in the content area of human growth and development across the lifespan. The remaining semester or quarter hours of support coursework must be fulfilled in the content areas of social sciences and humanities. In the equivalency path A standards, supportive coursework must include 24 semester or 32 quarter hours of acceptable coursework in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.

The concept of supportive coursework as defined by NCTRC means that the content of the course is supportive to the practice of therapeutic recreation and the coursework is taught in a department outside of the major department.

Courses taught in therapeutic recreation or the general recreation department will not be accepted as supportive coursework.

In most cases, the course title alone provides for easy classification and acceptance. For example, a course entitled “Introduction to Aging” would be considered appropriate as supportive coursework if taught in a department other than therapeutic recreation/recreation. Major coursework in another professional discipline is not generally accepted if it surveys practice in a specific discipline (e.g., “Occupational Therapy Practice,” “Social Work Practice,” etc.). However, general health and human service content taught within other discipline areas would be considered acceptable (e.g., a “Medical Terminology” course taught within a Department of Nursing or a “Counseling and Group Work” course taught within a Department of Social Work).

Applicants are encouraged to submit a course outline for a support course along with the Professional Eligibility Application to NCTRC if they believe a course title does not reflect the NCTRC requirements but that the content of the course substantially covers required content in anatomy and physiology, abnormal psychology, or human growth and development across the lifespan.

### **ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY REQUIREMENT:**

The content area of anatomy and physiology is required for professional certification because knowledge of human anatomy (bones, muscles, and body systems) and physiology (how those systems work and interface) is deemed essential to an educational foundation in therapeutic recreation. Across the continuum from inpatient care to independent enjoyment of recreation, from knowledge of pathology to the benefits of health promotion, the CTRS who facilitates the therapeutic recreation process in any way draws from knowledge of the human body. NCTRC believes that this foundation was best laid through the requirement of a course in anatomy and physiology. Typical course titles accepted by NCTRC include “Anatomy and Physiology” or “Human Anatomy and Physiology”, “Kinesiology” may be accepted as the physiology requirement if the applicant also completes a course in anatomy. If a single course is used to meet this requirement (ie: Human Anatomy and/or Human Physiology), then the course must address anatomy and physiology in equal parts (at least 50% of the course respectively). A course that is intended to serve as an entry-level Human Biology course does not meet the NCTRC Anatomy and Physiology requirement.

### **ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY REQUIREMENT:**

The content area of abnormal psychology is required for professional certification because knowledge of behavior disorders, theories of causation, descriptions of the disorders, and strategies of various therapies is deemed essential to an educational foundation in therapeutic recreation. NCTRC believes that this foundation was best laid through the requirement of a course in abnormal psychology. Typical course titles in abnormal psychology accepted by NCTRC include “Abnormal Psychology”, “Psychopathology”, “Behavioral Disorders”, and “Psychology of Behavioral Conditions”. A course in special education covering only learning disabilities would not be accepted as meeting the abnormal psychology requirement.

### **HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN REQUIREMENT:**

Human growth and development content is required for professional certification because knowledge of human development processes is a primary focus of therapeutic recreation. Basic knowledge of human growth and development and developmental theories is deemed essential to an educational foundation in therapeutic recreation. Across the continuum from inpatient care to independent enjoyment of recreation, from knowledge of pathology to the benefits of health promotion, the CTRS who facilitates the therapeutic recreation process in any way draws from knowledge of human development. NCTRC believes that this foundation was best laid through the requirement of a course in human growth and development across the lifespan. A typical course title accepted by NCTRC is “Human Development Across the Lifespan”.

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## Internship Standards Information

Quality, experiential learning using the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis is an integral component of professional preparation in therapeutic recreation. The internship experience is the primary means of addressing experiential learning. Universities and agencies are recognizing the critical value of a structured learning experience under the direct supervision of a qualified, practicing professional.

### AN EXPLANATION OF INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Internship experience refers to a highly structured, field-centered and professionally supervised requirement that is completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed as verified on the official transcript.

### AN EXPLANATION OF INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The internship experience requires extensive involvement and is a shared responsibility between the academic unit and the selected field agency. The minimum number of hours and weeks must be accomplished at one agency over a consecutive period of time. The agency supervisor must be currently NCTRC CTRS certified and possess the CTRS credential for one year prior to supervising an internship student. The academic supervisor must be an active CTRS at the start of the internship experience and be formally employed by the sponsoring academic institution for the duration of the internship experience. The same person (CTRS) cannot serve in the capacity of both the academic supervisor and agency supervisor during a given internship experience. The student must receive academic credit for the internship experience as verified by official transcript. Within this definition are many critical points that the practitioner, student, and educator should take into consideration in selecting an appropriate internship site:

- **Highly structured, field-centered and professionally supervised:** An acceptable internship must have one (1) identified primary agency supervisor. The primary supervisor works on a consistent basis with the student, coordinates all other secondary supervision and completes all evaluation materials and weekly reports pertaining to the internship experience. An acceptable internship must be based on the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the knowledge and tasks in the current NCTRC Job Analysis. This means the student must have exposure to all areas of the current NCTRC National Job Analysis. Additionally, the internship program should be well established at the agency. If an internship program and agency manual is not available, the student should question how the internship experience will be structured to insure the student completes the necessary knowledge and tasks for professional eligibility. The student may investigate how professional supervision will be conducted in practice. The primary supervisor is the one who works on a consistent basis with the student. The professional should not merely sign their CTRS on student evaluations.
- **Extensive involvement:** The primary agency CTRS supervisor must be employed at least 30 hours a week at the sponsoring agency. They must also possess the CTRS credential for one year prior to supervising an internship student. Seasonal or temporary employment is not accepted. Consultants or other types of preceptors are not accepted as agency supervisors. The primary supervisor must have at least 50% of the job duties within therapeutic recreation service within an established therapeutic recreation program at the agency. Extensive involvement also indicates that the primary supervisor will be working directly with the student. The primary supervisor is responsible for the direct supervision of the internship student, ensuring that the student is exposed to all of the Job Analysis Task Areas. All official documentation including midterm and final evaluations must be signed by the primary supervisor who also serves as the liaison to the university.
- **Active certification status of CTRS Supervisor:** The primary supervisor must possess active certification status at the CTRS level on the first day of the applicant's internship and have been certified for at least one year prior to supervising interns. Any change in certification status of the supervisor during the internship shall not affect the certification eligibility of an applicant. The student must obtain a copy of the supervisor's credential on the first day of the placement.
- **Shared responsibility between the academic unit and the selected field agency:** The internship experience is part of the student's academic requirements for a degree with a major or option in therapeutic recreation. The shared responsibility is between the faculty member and the agency therapeutic recreation supervisor to assure the student receives a quality internship experience which prepares them for practice in the field of therapeutic recreation. This means the student usually completes academic projects under faculty supervision, agency specific responsibilities under CTRS supervision, and that the final academic grade is usually awarded based on input from the agency and the academic supervisor. The Academic Internship Supervisor must be an active CTRS at the start of the internship experience.
- **Minimum number of hours and weeks** must be accomplished at one agency site over a consecutive period of time: NCTRC standards refer to the required "minimum" number of hours. No less than 20 hours per week or more than 45 hours per week will be accepted for the internship experience, except as may be provided in the Alternative Internship Guidelines. Additionally, the internship experience must be completed for no less than

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fourteen (14) consecutive full weeks. The total minimum number of required hours is 560. For students completing only 20 hours a week, the total number of weeks will be 28 to meet the minimum 560 hour requirements.

- ***Consecutive period of time and Alternative Internship Guidelines:*** The internship experience should be continuous and uninterrupted. In the case where serious illness or personal emergency causes absence or the inability to work at least 20 hours per week, no more than 2 consecutive weeks of interrupted internship work will be accepted. Official documentation regarding extreme emergencies or severe illness, and internship logs indicating evidence of completion of required 14 week, 560 hour requirement, must be submitted to NCTRC with the application. When a internship is interrupted due to one of these factors, the student should immediately contact NCTRC for Alternative Internship Guidelines.
- ***The experience must take place at one agency site:*** The total hours may not be split among different agencies or accumulated over multiple sites, unless the site is within the same agency, and under the direct supervision of the CTRS. Student's attendance at professional conferences and workshops are permitted, if approved by the internship supervisor. An alternative internship may be considered by NCTRC when a internship is interrupted due to the closing of an agency, termination or resignation, or personal circumstance, which would prevent the primary CTRS supervisor from completing the internship supervision. When a internship is interrupted due to one of these factors, the student should immediately contact NCTRC for Alternative Internship Guidelines.
- ***On-site, primary agency supervisor must be currently certified*** at the professional level with NCTRC: The student's agency supervisor is their direct and immediate supervisor during the internship experience. Current certification means that the supervisor is "actively" certified as a CTRS. The candidate who has "made application" for certification or is classified by NCTRC as "Professionally Eligible" is not considered actively certified until they pass the CTRS exam and receive their official certificate from NCTRC. Thus, these individuals should not supervise student internships.
- ***Must receive academic credit and an evaluative grade for the internship experience as verified by official transcript.*** NCTRC will verify on the student's official transcript that the internship experience was completed over the same dates as the semester or quarter in which the student receives academic credit for the experience.

#### **HOW TO VERIFY THE ACTIVE CERTIFICATION OF A INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR**

The internship experience is a very important requirement of the NCTRC Certification Standards for the professional academic path to CTRS certification. NCTRC verifies the certification of each academic and agency internship supervisor. If NCTRC determines that a supervisor was not actively certified at the beginning of the internship, then the applicant will not be able to count the internship experience toward certification requirements. Further, the application will be denied.

It is hoped that all certified personnel and educators will assist the student intern in this process of selecting a qualified and Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist for their supervision. The student must verify the active certification of both supervisors before beginning a placement at any agency offering a therapeutic recreation internship experience by obtaining a copy of the supervisor's current NCTRC certificate. This is the only assurance that the person is a current CTRS. Each CTRS' certificate has specific information pertaining to (a) the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist certification; (b) the certification expiration date; and (c) the certification number. Only an active CTRS is eligible to supervise a internship experience. As long as both supervisors are certified by NCTRC on the first day of the applicant's internship and the agency supervisor has been certified for a minimum of one year prior to supervising interns, the internship will be accepted. Any change in certification status of the supervisor subsequent to inception of the internship shall not affect the certification eligibility of an applicant. Therefore, it is critical that each student intern obtains a copy of the supervisor's active CTRS credential (i.e., CTRS certificate) on the first day of the placement. A student intern may verify the information on the supervisor's CTRS credential by accessing [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org).

CTRSs have been asked to help protect students by willingly sharing a copy of their NCTRC certification credentials before the student begins the placement. If a potential supervisor has lost or misplaced their credentials, they can print a replacement certificate by logging into their profile at MY NCTRC LOGIN. If a potential supervisor is not able to produce a current certificate, the student is advised to be cautious of accepting that the individual is certified until direct verification of credentials is obtained. If the candidate has further questions regarding this process please contact NCTRC directly.

#### **PLEASE REPORT ANY MISREPRESENTATIONS**

Any individual who uses the title "CTRS," or represents himself or herself as being NCTRC certified without having fulfilled the requirements of the NCTRC certification process is deemed in violation of the *Certification Standards* and may be denied the right to future certification or may be subject to legal action. If an individual misrepresents NCTRC certification as a CTRS or using confusingly similar designations, please report this information to NCTRC immediately.

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**WHAT TO DO IF A INTERNSHIP IS INTERRUPTED DUE TO AN EMERGENCY**

An alternative internship proposal may be considered by NCTRC when a internship is interrupted due to the closing of an agency, termination of a CTRS supervisor, extreme emergencies or severe illness. When a internship is interrupted due to one of these factors, the student should immediately contact NCTRC for guidelines on what will be required in a certification application for consideration of an alternative internship.

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## Examination Information

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The NCTRC testing program commenced in 1990 with the adoption of a 200 item written exam. The NCTRC Exam is based on the NCTRC Job Analysis of the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, which assures the test specifications and the exam are related to the practice of therapeutic recreation. Since 1990, the NCTRC exam has evolved through several phases to its current computer-based format.

NCTRC subcontracts the exam administration to Prometric, a global leader in technology-enabled testing and assessment services for academic, professional, government, corporate and information technology markets delivering 8,000,000 exams each year Prometric delivers standardized tests for 300 clients, in 40 languages, over the Web or through a global network of testing centers in 180 countries. Prometric's corporate headquarters is based in Baltimore, Maryland and the company employs 2,200 employees worldwide.

### Exam Dates

The NCTRC National Certification Exam is administered at Prometric Testing Centers across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The NCTRC Exam is offered six times throughout the year utilizing a two-week testing window for each exam administration.

### PROMETRIC TESTING CENTERS

Prometric is NCTRC's partner for delivery of computer-based tests. Prometric provides a mature network of computer testing centers capable of administering exams. Up-to-date Prometric Test Center locations are published on the website [www.prometric.com/nctrc](http://www.prometric.com/nctrc). These centers are subject to change without notice. All Prometric Test Centers are connected electronically through an advanced telecommunication network to assure standardization of transmission quality and timeliness. The test sites are required to comply with regulations governing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Special Arrangements

Individuals who have a physical or cognitive impairment or limitation that prevents him/her from taking the exam under standard testing conditions may request special testing arrangements. All candidates requesting an exam accommodation are required to submit a completed accommodation application packet consisting of the Accommodation Request Form, the Professional Accommodation Verification Form and additional documentation related to the scope and nature of the candidate's identified disability. Please visit [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org) for the NCTRC Special Testing Accommodations Guidelines and Applications document.

The Professional Accommodation Verification Form is required to confirm the candidate's special needs and testing adaptation request. NCTRC must receive the completed accommodation application packet at least one (1) week prior to the end of a given exam registration period to assure appropriate enrollment in the next available exam. There is no extra fee for making these arrangements.

The special accommodations available are but not limited to:

- Reader
- Marker/Writer
- Sign language interpreter for instructions
- Separate room
- Double test time (please read "About Taking the Exam with Special Arrangements" in the following section )
- Extended time by 1.5 (please read "About Taking the Exam with Special Arrangements" in the following section )
- Other accommodations upon request.

Candidates approved for special arrangements must call the Testing Accommodations Advocate at the Prometric Candidate Services Contact Center (CSCC) at the toll-free number (800) 967-1139 to schedule their appointment for exam administration. Local centers may not schedule appointments for candidates approved to receive special accommodations.



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## **INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERIZED TESTING**

You will not need extensive computer experience to use computer-based testing. Computer-based testing with Prometric:

- provides a brief on-line computerized tutorial to guide you on how to use the computer to take the exam;
- presents a computer workstation equipped with a mouse (desktop, hand-operated device for selecting answers and other options from your computer screen);
- allows you to mark questions as a reminder to review them later;
- continuously tracks and displays time remaining for your convenience;
- provides a score report immediately upon completion of your exam; and
- provides a fully trained proctor during your exam for technical assistance (not related to exam content).

## **ABOUT THE TUTORIAL**

At the beginning of your exam, you will be provided with a brief computerized tutorial. The purpose of the tutorial is to familiarize you with selecting answers, using the testing features such as "Previous", "Next" and "Mark," as well as to familiarize you with the mouse and the overall operation of the keyboard. You do not need to be concerned with which answers you select during the tutorial as these items are not scored. Once you exit from the tutorial, you may not return to it.

## **ABOUT TAKING THE EXAM**

The NCTRC examination is a 3 hour examination. During the administration of the examination, each candidate will be presented with an exam form consisting of 150 multiple choice items. You are permitted to move back and forth within the test form and candidates should answer each question presented, marking any questions you would like to review should time permit. The test may not be reviewed once it has been exited.

Upon completion of the test, you will receive a score report indicating pass or fail.

To maximize your time and to assure that you do not exit the test in error before answering all of the questions, you should attempt each question before reviewing marked questions. To ensure the valid development of the NCTRC exam program, a small number of items will be presented in order to gather performance statistics. These items will be non-scored, will not impact your test result and will be presented randomly within the test form.

If a candidate is unsuccessful in achieving the required passing score, they are able to register for the next available exam provided professional eligibility is active with NCTRC.

## **About Taking the Exam with Special Arrangements**

### **Taking the exam with Extended Time:**

The NCTRC CTRS Examination contains 150 multiple choice items for which you will receive 270 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the exam, you will receive a score report indicating pass or fail.

### **Taking the exam with Double Time:**

The NCTRC CTRS Examination contains 150 multiple choice items for which you will receive 360 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the exam, you will receive a score report indicating pass or fail.

## **Scheduling Your Examination Appointment**

### **AUTHORIZATION TO TEST**

Upon confirmation of your registration eligibility by NCTRC, NCTRC will notify Prometric. NCTRC will email to your attention an Authorization to Test (ATT). Please review your name and address information on the ATT carefully to ensure that it is accurate. Your name, as it appears on this ATT, **must exactly match** the name that appears on your government issued photo identification. If this information is incorrect please contact NCTRC immediately.

You will need your ATT to schedule an appointment to take the NCTRC exam. Once you register for the exam you will receive a confirmation email from Prometric. You are highly encouraged to bring a copy of the confirmation email to the test center.

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## **PROCEDURE FOR SCHEDULING YOUR NCTRC EXAM**

You may take the NCTRC exam at any Prometric Testing Center provided there is space available. When you receive your ATT, visit [www.Prometric.com/NCTRC](http://www.Prometric.com/NCTRC) or call Prometric at (888) 999-3926 to make your appointment. Do not call until you receive your ATT. Have your ATT available when you make your call. The Prometric Testing Center staff will ask you to supply your name, telephone number, email address and your authorization number from your ATT. You will also be asked for your preference for date of testing at a Prometric Testing Center.

If your first choice of date is unavailable, you will be offered an alternative that is as close to your first choice as possible.

Make a note of when and where you have been scheduled for the examination. Confirmation of your appointment will be sent to you by Prometric. If you arrive at the test center on the wrong date and time, you will not be able to reschedule your appointment and you will forfeit your test fee. Be sure to ask for directions to the Prometric Testing Center, if you need them.

Your appointment must be scheduled at least 48 hours prior to the test date.

Note: Candidates approved for testing accommodations must call (800) 967-1139 to schedule their appointment for administration.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SCHEDULING VIA INTERNET**

- You may schedule your appointment via the Internet by going to: [www.Prometric.com/NCTRC](http://www.Prometric.com/NCTRC).
- Select SCHEDULE MY TEST. Choose Country and State. Select Next.
- You will reach Information Review. Please read the information and select Next.
- You must agree to the Privacy Policy Review in order to continue. Please click I Agree and select Next. Continue by following the instructions.
- If you require Testing Accommodations, with a time extension only, you can schedule your test via the Internet. All other accommodations will need to call the Testing Accommodations Advocate at the Prometric Candidate Services Contact Center (CSCC) at the toll-free number (800) 967-1139 to schedule your examination.

## **PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULING OR CANCELING NCTRC EXAM APPOINTMENTS**

### **Rescheduling an Exam Appointment with Prometric within the same Exam Window**

Please visit [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com) and click on the Reschedule / Cancel tab at the top of the page or call (888) 999-9728 as soon as possible to ensure the availability of an alternative appointment. Candidates with special accommodations must call the Testing Accommodations Advocate at the Prometric Candidate Services Contact Center (CSCC) at the toll-free number (800) 967-1139 to reschedule. Testing accommodation candidates with time only extensions can reschedule directly online. Do not leave a message on the answering machine; doing so does not constitute official notification.

Fee structure for rescheduling an exam appointment:

- Rescheduling up to 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date: no fee will be charged;
- Rescheduling between 5-29 days prior to the scheduled exam date: \$35 fee will be charged by Prometric;
- Rescheduling less than 5 days prior to the scheduled exam date: unable to reschedule.

### **Canceling a Scheduled Exam Appointment with Prometric**

Please visit [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com) and click on the Reschedule / Cancel tab at the top of the page or call (888) 999-9728 as soon as possible. Candidates with special accommodations must call the Testing Accommodations Advocate at the Prometric Candidate Services Contact Center (CSCC) at the toll-free number (800) 967-1139 to cancel. Testing accommodation candidates with time only extensions can cancel directly online. Do not leave a message on the answering machine; doing so does not constitute official notification.

Fee structure for cancellation of an exam appointment:

- Cancellation up to 30 days prior to the scheduled exam date: no fee will be charged;
- Cancellation between 5-29 days prior to the scheduled exam date: \$35 fee will be charged by Prometric;
- Cancellation less than 5 days before the scheduled exam date: forfeiture of the entire exam fee.

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## **NCTRC Exam Program Policies**

- Failure to arrive at the exam appointment or arrival of more than fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time of the exam will result in the forfeiture of the entire exam fee and the Authorization to Test (ATT) will be invalidated.
- Failure to make an appointment or if you cancel an appointment for an exam once you are issued an Authorization to Test (ATT) number will result in a \$25 rescheduling fee to be issued a new ATT number for a new testing window.
- Request for a refund of the exam fee will be restricted to a 50% reimbursement regardless of when in the exam cycle the request is sent to NCTRC. The only exception to this policy is if the refund is associated with an exam cancellation of less than 5 days prior to the scheduled appointment date which then will result in the forfeiture of the entire exam fee.
- All exam withdrawal refunds will be issued following the completion of the testing window.

## **Personal Identification and Examination Security**

Prometric is committed to a strong, secure, testing environment for all candidates visiting one of its test centers. Over the past few years, Prometric has made several significant investments to further strengthen security in our test centers, including a global roll-out of digital video recorders and enhancements to biometrics at certain centers.

Because of the importance of the NCTRC exams, numerous security measures will be enforced during the test administrations. Strict candidate identification requirements have been established.

### **IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- You should always use the same form of your name. Do not change the spelling and do not change the order of your name.
- If you need to contact Prometric for any assistance, use the same form of your name that is on your NCTRC registration form.
- When you arrive at the test center, you will be required to present one form of valid, government issued photo and signature bearing identification. Expired ID's will not be accepted. You will not be admitted to the examination without the proper identification. If you arrive without proper ID, you will not be allowed to test and will be considered a "no-show", and your exam fee will be forfeited.
- If your name has changed since you registered for the examination, you will need to bring documentation of this change (e.g., a marriage license) with you for identification purposes.

Acceptable forms of identification (**which must include your signature and photograph**) are: current (valid) driver's license, state or government-issued identification card, or a current (valid) passport. Your ID photo must be current and look like you. Your signature on the ID must match your signature on the Test Center roster when you check-in. The spelling of your name on your ID must match the Test Center's record and your ATT.

### **ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS**

You will be observed at all times while taking the examination. This observation will include direct observation by test center staff as well as video and audio monitoring of your examination session.

### **ON THE DAY OF THE EXAMINATION**

The staff at each Prometric Testing Center follows designated procedures to ensure that the operation of the test center meets the NCTRC criteria for standardized testing. Plan to arrive at the Prometric Testing Center at least 30 minutes before your scheduled testing time. If you arrive 30 minutes after your scheduled appointment, you may be required to forfeit your appointment. If you forfeit your appointment, you will be required to register again. Friends or relatives who accompany you to the test center will not be permitted to wait in the test center or contact you while you are taking the examination.

The following activities will occur when you arrive at the Prometric Testing Centers for your appointment:

1. You must present one form of valid, government issued photo and signature bearing identification.
2. You will be asked to sign in at the center. Your signature will be compared to your identification that you present. You will be asked to sign your name every time you enter or leave the testing area within the center.
3. You will be required to leave your personal belongings outside the testing room. Secure storage will be provided. However, you should keep your government issued identification with you at all times. If you leave the testing room for any reason, you will be required to show the test administrator your identification to be readmitted to the room. Storage space is small, so candidates should plan appropriately. Do not take large bags, textbooks, notebooks, or any other unnecessary items to the test center. Prometric Testing Centers assume no responsibility for

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candidates' personal belongings. For additional security protocols, please visit <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/for-test-takers/prepare-for-test-day/pages/overview.aspx>

4. As of July 1, 2011 Prometric TCAs began using hand-held metal detector wands to scan all candidates in the AP&C Test Centers in the United States and Territories. All candidates are scanned prior to each entry into the test room, including returns from breaks. Candidates are still required to turn their pockets out, and the scan is done immediately afterward. The purpose of the wand scan is to take an additional step in identifying any prohibited devices that a candidate might attempt to take into the testing room. Prometric's Security Department conducted a pilot of this program in 2010 using the wands for a period of five months. Approximately 60,000 candidates were scanned during that time. Ultimately, the wand was found to be a strong deterrent and operationally effective. Based on the results of the pilot, Prometric decided to move forward with this program and has deployed hand-held metal detectors to all US Test Centers.
5. In addition to this message, information about wanding has been added to Prometric's standard Test Center Regulations Form. This form is posted on Prometric's website and is given to all candidates to read prior to check-in. The scan will be done in full view of the TCA DVR camera so it will be recorded, and any candidate complaints or escalations can be properly investigated. All candidates will be required to submit to the scans. Any candidates refusing to be scanned will not be permitted to test. Please rest assured that the metal detectors do not affect pregnancies, pacemakers, or other medical equipment that's connected to the body.
6. The test administrator will give you a short orientation and will then escort you to a computer terminal. You must remain in your seat during the examination, except when authorized to leave by a test center staff member.
7. At the beginning of the exam, you will be required to signify your assent to the terms and conditions of the Confidentiality and Conduct Agreement.
8. The test administrator will provide you with a dry erase board and two dry erase markers to take notes during testing. You may not take your own scratch paper or pencil to the examination, nor may you remove the dry erase board from the testing room during breaks. The dry erase board must be given to the test administrator upon completion of your test.
9. Raise your hand to notify the test administrator if you:
  - believe you have a problem with your computer
  - need to take a break
  - need assistance for any reason
10. Disposable earplugs will be available from the administrator.
11. The clock will continue to run and will not be turned off for unplanned, unscheduled breaks. If there is a power outage, the time will stop counting down. The test will resume at the point where it left off when power is restored.
12. After your examination is finished, you will be asked to complete a brief, computer-delivered questionnaire about your testing experience.
13. The test administrator will collect the dry erase board. Removing the dry erase board from the test center is considered an act of misconduct.
14. If you have any additional comments, you are encouraged to send your comments directly to Prometric at [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).
15. Dress comfortably for the exam.

Please Note: On rare occasions, technical problems and weather emergencies may require rescheduling of a candidate's examination. If delays are extended more than 30 minutes past a scheduled appointment, the candidate will be offered the opportunity to reschedule without cost.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONDUCT AGREEMENT**

"The contents of NCTRC's Exams are copyrighted, proprietary, and confidential. Disclosure or reproduction of any portion of a NCTRC Exam to any individual or entity for any purpose whatsoever is prohibited. Such activity will result in the invalidation of test scores and may result in civil and/or criminal prosecution.

You can be disqualified from taking or continuing to sit for an examination, or from receiving examination results, or your scores might be canceled if there is substantial reason to believe through proctor observations, statistical analysis, and/or other evidence that your score may not be valid or that you were engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other unacceptable behavior during the administration of this examination."

#### **TEST CENTER REGULATIONS**

To ensure that all candidates' results are earned under comparable conditions and represent fair and accurate measurement, it is necessary to maintain a standardized testing environment. The following regulations are strictly enforced. No papers, books, food, or purses are allowed in the testing room. No eating, drinking, or use of tobacco is allowed in the testing room.

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## **GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL**

Any candidate who does not have positive identification, who uses unauthorized aids, or who does not follow the testing procedures can be dismissed from the test center. NCTRC may choose to have the test scores of such candidates canceled. A candidate who is believed to be engaging in misconduct and does not heed the administrator's warning to discontinue the behavior may be dismissed from the test center. All of the following behaviors are considered to be misconduct:

- giving or receiving unauthorized assistance of any kind
- using any unauthorized aids
- attempting to take the examination for someone else
- failing to follow testing regulations or the instructions of the test administrator
- creating a disturbance of any kind
- removing or attempting to remove examination questions and/or responses (in any format) or notes about the examination from the testing room
- tampering with the operation of the computer or attempting to use it for any function other than taking the examination

## **CANDIDATE MISCONDUCT**

NCTRC examinations serve an important public function, and no misconduct will be tolerated. Before test scores are canceled for misconduct, the candidate is notified and given an opportunity to provide additional information. If during the administration of an examination, a test administrator believes misconduct is taking place, certain options shall be available to the test administrator.

- A test administrator may dismiss a candidate from the test and file a report with Prometric stating the action and the reasons for dismissal.
- A test administrator may choose not to dismiss the candidate from the test; however, under such circumstances the test administrator will file an irregularity report with Prometric describing his or her observations.
- In either event, when a test administrator reports to Prometric that a candidate might have committed misconduct during an examination, that candidate's test record is reviewed by Prometric and NCTRC.
- Prometric and NCTRC have the right to question any test score whose validity is in doubt because the score may have been obtained unfairly. Prometric first undertakes a confidential review of the circumstances giving rise to the questions about score validity. If there is sufficient cause to question the score, Prometric will refer the matter to NCTRC. NCTRC expects all individuals to cooperate in any NCTRC investigation or any investigation carried out by the NCTRC authorized testing service.
- NCTRC reserves the right to cancel any examination scores if, in the sole opinion of NCTRC, there is adequate reason to question its validity. NCTRC, in its discretion, will (i) offer the individual an opportunity to take the examination again at no additional fee, or (ii) provide review, hearing, and determination of validity of the examination, pursuant to the filing of appropriate requests to NCTRC's Standards Review Committee and Standards Hearing Committee.
- **Copyright.** All proprietary rights in the examinations, including copyright and trade secret, are held by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. In order to protect the integrity of the examinations and to assure the validity of the scores that are reported, candidates must adhere to strict guidelines regarding proper conduct in handling these copyrighted, proprietary examinations. Any attempt to reproduce all or part of an examination is strictly prohibited by law. Such an attempt includes, but is not limited to: removing materials from the examination room; aiding others by any means in reconstructing any portion of an examination; or selling, distributing, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of an exam. Alleged copyright violations will be investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. It should also be noted that examination scores might be invalidated in the event of this type of suspected breach.

## **Reporting Test Results**

Candidates will receive an unofficial pass or fail score notification at the test center. The score notification will be available on the computer screen and not in written format. Official written score reports will be emailed from Prometric. Passing candidates receive a score report with PASS indicated. The exam is designed as a knowledge competency test and is not intended to distinguish among scores above the passing point. Therefore, no scores are reported for passing candidates. This policy is established as a safeguard against misuse of the exam scores of passing candidates. If a candidate does not pass the examination, the score report will indicate that the candidate was unsuccessful in achieving the required passing scaled score.

The score report of those who do not pass will indicate a scaled score between 20 and 54 along with diagnostic indicators for the six content areas included in the exam. The diagnostic indicators are intended to help identify areas of strength and weakness; they are not to be used for pass/fail determination because this would lead to unreliable decisions.

The diagnostic indicators are as follows:

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Indication</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>The candidate's score is below the level of minimum competency</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The candidate's score is at or above the level of minimum competency</b>

Each candidate receives a test that conforms to the content outline for the test appearing in these Certification Standards and is given sufficient opportunity to demonstrate possession of the knowledge required to practice as a minimally competent entry-level CTRS. Matching the above scale of indicators to the content areas of the exam will aid the candidate in further preparation for future exam.

NOTE: CANDIDATES ARE LIMITED TO ONE (1) EXAM PER TEST ADMINISTRATION. AN ELIGIBLE CANDIDATE WHO DOES NOT PASS THE TEST MAY REGISTER TO TAKE THE NEXT SCHEDULED TEST.

### Exam Content Outline

The NCTRC Job Analysis outlines the knowledge and skills used in therapeutic recreation practice. The job skills represent the core components of current therapeutic recreation practice. The knowledge areas serve as the content of the NCTRC exam. The exam content outline listed below is based on the knowledge areas taken from the 2014 Job Analysis Study.

#### Exam Content

Content Areas	Percentage of Exam
<b>Foundational Knowledge</b>	20%
<b>Assessment Process</b>	19%
<b>Documentation</b>	18%
<b>Implementation</b>	26%
<b>Administration of TR/RT Service</b>	10%
<b>Advancement of the Profession</b>	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### I. Foundational Knowledge – 20%

##### A. Theories and Concepts

- Human developmental stages across the lifespan
- Theories of human behavior and principles of behavioral change (e.g., Maslow's hierarchy, social learning theory, experiential learning model, self-determination theory, stress-coping, societal attitudes)
- Concepts and models of health and human services (e.g., medical model, community model, education model, health and wellness model, person-centered care model, International Classification of Functioning, recovery model, inclusion)
- Principles of group dynamics and leadership

- Legislative and regulatory guidelines and standards (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Joint Commission, CARF)
- Contributions of play, recreation, and leisure to health, and well-being (e.g., flow theory, benefits, quality of life)

##### B. Practice Guidelines

- Models of TR/RT service delivery (e.g., Leisure Ability Model, Health Protection/Health Promotion Model, TR Service Delivery Model, Health and Well-Being Model)
- Practice settings (e.g., hospital, long-term care, community-based, schools, home health care)
- Standards of practice

4. Code of ethics
5. Professional qualifications (e.g., certification, licensure)
6. Cultural competency (e.g., social, cultural, educational, language, spiritual, socioeconomic, age, environment)

### **C. Diagnostic Groupings**

1. Cognitive/developmental disorders and related impairments (e.g., dementia, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities)
2. Physical/medical disorders and related impairments (e.g., diabetes, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injury, sensory impairments)
3. Psychiatric disorders and related impairments (e.g., addictions, PTSD)

## **II. Assessment Process – 19%**

### **A. Selection and Implementation of Assessment**

1. Current TR/RT assessment instruments
2. Interprofessional inventories and questionnaires (e.g., standardized rating systems, developmental screening tests)
3. Secondary sources of assessment data (e.g., records or charts, staff, support system)
4. Criteria for selection and/or development of assessment (e.g., reliability, validity, practicality, availability)
5. Implementation of assessment (e.g., behavioral observations, interviews, performance testing)

### **B. Assessment Domains**

1. Sensory assessment (e.g., vision, hearing, tactile)
2. Cognitive assessment (e.g., memory, problem solving, attention span, orientation, safety awareness)
3. Social assessment (e.g., communication/interactive skills, relationships)
4. Physical assessment (e.g., fitness, motor skills function)
5. Affective assessment (e.g., attitude toward self, expression)
6. Leisure assessment (e.g., barriers, interests, values, Patterns/skills, knowledge)
7. Functional skills assessment (e.g., access in the community, using social media, using transportation)

## **III. Documentation – 18%**

1. Interpretation and documentation of assessment results
2. Individualized intervention plan (e.g., identification of problems, strategies for treatment, modalities)
3. Writing measurable goals and behavioral objectives
4. Progress/functional status (e.g., SOAP, FIM, DARP)

5. Modification of intervention plan (e.g., reevaluation)
6. Discharge/transition plan of person(s) served
7. Required facility documentation (e.g., adverse incidents)

## **IV. Implementation – 26%**

1. Selection of programs, activities and interventions to achieve the assessed needs of the person(s) served
2. Purpose and techniques of activity/task analysis
3. Activity modifications (e.g., assistive techniques, technology, and adaptive devices)
4. Modalities and/or interventions (e.g., leisure skill/education, assertiveness training, stress management, social skills, community reintegration)
5. Facilitation approaches (e.g., strengths based approach, holistic approach, person-centered, palliative care)
6. Intervention techniques (e.g., behavior management, counseling skills, experiential learning)
7. Risk management and safety concerns
8. Role and function of other health and human service professions and of interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., co-treatment, consultation, referral)

## **V. Administration of Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy Service – 10%**

1. TR/RT service plan of operation (e.g., TRAM model, policy and procedure development)
2. Procedures for program evaluation and accountability (e.g., attendance, participation rates, cost benefit analysis)
3. Quality improvement guidelines and techniques (e.g., utilization review, risk management, peer review, outcome monitoring)
4. Personnel, intern, and volunteer management (e.g., recruitment, supervision, coordination, evaluation)
5. Payment system (e.g. government funding, managed care, private contract, Medicare, Medicaid, ICDM)
6. Facility and equipment management (e.g., maintenance, upgrading, inventory)
7. Budgeting and fiscal management (e.g., fund acquisition, fund management)

## **VI. Advancement of the Profession – 7%**

1. Professionalism (e.g., professional boundaries, professional appearance, and behavior)
2. Credential maintenance and upgrading professional competencies (e.g., certification, recertification, licensure, continuing education, specializations)
3. Advocacy for person(s) served (e.g., patient/consumer rights, grievance policies, HIPAA)

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4. Legislation and regulations pertaining to TR/RT (e.g., related service definitions, Affordable Care Act)
  5. Public relations, promotion and marketing of the TR/RT profession
  6. Professional associations and organizations
  7. Research activities (e.g., research of evidence-based literature, efficacy of TR/RT interventions)
  8. Collaboration between higher education and direct service providers (e.g., provision of internships, supporting research)

## How is Your Score Determined

The passing score was established via a systematic procedure (Passing Score Study) that employed the judgment of a representative group of Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists from across the country with the assistance of Prometric. This group of CTRSs recommended to NCTRC a standard of what a minimally competent entry-level recreational therapist needs to know about the tested content to obtain a passing score. The final decision regarding the passing score was made by NCTRC Board of Directors and will be applied to the test you are administered.

For the NCTRC exam, there is one reported pass/fail decision score. A total scaled score of at least 55 is needed to pass the exam. Scores are determined by converting the number of questions answered correctly (i.e., each correct question is worth the same) to a scaled score that ranges from approximately 20 to beyond 55.

A scaled score is neither the number of questions answered correctly nor the percentage of questions answered correctly. A scaled score is a transformed raw score (the number of examination questions answered correctly given the length of the examination taken). To interpret any examination score, a uniform frame of reference is required. Scaled scores provide that frame of reference based on the standard adopted by NCTRC of the amount of knowledge necessary to pass without regard to the specific exam form or version taken.

### **EXAM SCORE INFORMATION**

*RELIABILITY:* Reliability refers to the consistency of the exam scores. Exam scores can be inconsistent due to a variety of factors depending on the condition of the test taker, the kind of exam given, situational factors external to the exam, and/or the way a particular exam is scored. Reliability also refers to the degree to which exam scores are free from errors of measurement. Errors of measurement can occur when an exam taker may perform differently on one occasion than on another for reasons that may or may not be related to the purpose of the exam. A person may try harder, be more tired or anxious, have greater familiarity with the content of questions on one exam form than on another, or simply guess correctly on more questions on one occasion than on another.

Another kind of reliability involves the consistency with which exams with cut scores are classified as either passing or failing. For these and other reasons, a person's score will not be perfectly consistent from one occasion to the next.

The concept of reliability is expressed as a reliability coefficient. Reliability coefficients range from 0 (absence of reliability) to 1 (perfect reliability). In the past, the reliability for the total exam score (content consistency) has been about .88 for the total score. The reliability of how consistently candidates were classified as either passing or failing has been about .90.

*STANDARD ERROR OF MEASUREMENT:* Since no measure of exam performance is perfectly accurate, it might be asked, "How accurate is my scaled score?" This question is not directly answerable, since it requires knowing what the candidate's score should be (the true score). The true score can never be known. The difference between the actual exam score and the true exam score is the "error of measurement" associated with a particular form of the exam. Since a person's score will vary from one exam form to another, it would be convenient to estimate the amount of variation one can expect for any given exam form. Such an estimate can be calculated and is called the standard error of measurement (SEM). If an exam could measure the elements of the subject matter without error, the value of the SEM associated with that exam would be zero.

*WHAT EQUATING DOES:* Exam developers attempt to make each new form (edition) of the exam equal in difficulty to previous forms. However, difficulty level varies somewhat from one exam form to another. Equating makes mathematical adjustments to scores on one form of the exam so that scores on that exam are comparable to scores on any other form of the exam.

*AN ILLUSTRATION OF EQUATING:* Suppose we have two individuals, the candidate and a friend, and both are equal in mathematical ability. Both take a mathematics exam. Both exams are intended to cover the same type of mathematics questions; however, the exam the candidate takes is more difficult than the one the friend takes. The candidate answered 135 questions correctly on the exam. The friend answered 140 questions correctly on his/her exam. It obviously would not be accurate or fair to conclude, on the basis of the exam scores, that the candidate was not as skilled in mathematics as the friend was. The difference in the exam scores was not due to one's mathematical abilities, because our first assumption was that the candidate and the friend were of equal ability. The difference in the scores was because one exam form was harder than the other was. Equating allows us to determine that a 135 on the exam that the candidate took represents the same level of mathematical knowledge, skills and abilities as a score of 140 on the exam the friend took.



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*THE PURPOSE OF SCALING:* Scaling allows scores to be reported on a common scale. Instead of having to remember that a 135 on the exam the candidate took is equivalent to a 140 on the exam that the friend took, we can use a common scale and report the score as a scaled score of 60. Since we know that the friend's score of 140 is equal to the score of 135, the friend's score would also be reported as a scaled score of 60.

### **COMPLAINTS**

Candidates with complaints or comments about Prometric Testing Centers facilities and/or supervision, examination content, or any other matter related to the testing program should complete the exit evaluation questionnaire on the computer at the test center or write to Prometric at [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).

### **EXAM REFERENCES**

NCTRC provides a reference list of the major therapeutic recreation literature that was available as reference material in the development of the national exam for CTRS certification.

### **TO PREPARE TO TAKE THE NCTRC CERTIFICATION EXAM**

1. Review the Exam Content Outline to learn the percentage of each major content areas on the exam.
2. Review the list of exam references for further information.
3. Look at the sample items to become familiar with the nature of the individual exam questions.
4. Go to [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org) for additional resources and study aids on computer based testing.

## **2014 NCTRC Job Analysis Job Tasks and Knowledge Areas for the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist**

A benchmark for any profession is its ability to routinely monitor its own practice through an ongoing process of self-regulation. Paramount to this process is the establishment of a credentialing program that enabled the profession to safeguard consumers by stating who is competent to practice. The establishment of a valid job analysis is essential to the integrity of a credentialing program and an exam program.

In 2014, NCTRC completed its fourth comprehensive Job Analysis Study. The list of tasks below are the current tasks performed by the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. These job tasks represent the therapeutic recreation process. The knowledge base for therapeutic recreation practice forms the basis of the NCTRC exam content and is used to evaluate continuing education for therapeutic recreation.

### **2014 NCTRC Job Analysis -Job Tasks for the CTRS-**

#### **Professional Relationships and Responsibilities**

1. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with person(s) served, co-workers, allied departments, and external customers
2. Create and maintain a safe and therapeutic environment
3. Maintain CTRS and required state credential(s)
4. Participate in in-service training and staff development
5. Maintain knowledge of current TR/RT trends, techniques, methods, issues, and professional and legal standards
6. Enhance professional competence through additional credentials
7. Enhance professional competence through contribution to the TR/RT field (e.g., professional presentations, research, attending conferences)

8. Support the development of evidence-based practices
9. Adhere to professional standards of practice and code of ethics
10. Participate in quality improvement process (e.g., exit interviews, customer service satisfaction, peer reviews)
11. Participate in agency/professional committees

#### **Assessment**

12. Request and secure referrals/orders from professionals or other sources
13. Obtain and review pertinent information about person(s) served (e.g., records or charts, staff, support system)
14. Select and/or develop assessment methods based on validity, reliability, and needs of the person(s) served and setting (e.g. interview, observation, task performance, established instruments)
15. Establish therapeutic relationship with person(s) served
16. Conduct assessments using selected methods to determine physical, social, affective,

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cognitive, leisure lifestyle functioning, and environmental factors

17. Analyze and interpret results from assessments
18. Integrate, record, and disseminate results to identified others (e.g., person(s) served, treatment team)

### **Plan Interventions and/or Programs**

19. Discuss results of assessment and involve the person(s) served or identified others (e.g., parent or legal guardian, support system, treatment team, service providers) in the design of individualized intervention plan
20. Develop and document individualized or group intervention plan with goals, objectives, evaluation criteria, and discharge/transition plan
21. Develop and/or select interventions and approaches to achieve individual and/or group goals
22. Develop and/or select protocols for individual and/or group session(s)
23. Utilize activity and/or task analysis prior to interventions/programs
24. Select adaptations, modifications, and/or assistive technology as needed

### **Implement Interventions and/or Programs**

25. Explain the purpose and outcomes of the intervention/program and steps to be followed to the person(s) served and/or identified others (e.g., parent or legal guardian, support system, treatment team, service providers)
26. Implement individual and/or group session(s), protocols, and/or programs
27. Use leadership, facilitation, and adaptation techniques to maximize therapeutic benefit
28. Monitor and address safety concerns throughout the intervention/program
29. Observe person(s) served for response to intervention/program and document important data (e.g., interaction with others, group, or therapist)
30. Monitor effectiveness of individual and/or group intervention/program plans and make modifications as needed

### **Evaluate Outcomes of the Interventions and/or Programs**

31. Evaluate changes in functioning of the person(s) served
32. Determine effectiveness of individual intervention plan and/or program and adjust as needed

33. Revise individualized intervention plan and/or program as necessary with input from the person(s) served and identified others (e.g., parent or legal guardian, support system, treatment team, service providers)
34. Evaluate individual's need for additional, alternative, or discharge of services
35. Determine effectiveness of protocols, modalities, and/or programs for targeted groups

### **Document Intervention Services**

36. Document participation and adherence to intervention
37. Document behavioral observations, progress, functioning, and intervention outcomes of the person(s) served
38. Document occurrences, accidents, and incidents relating to risk management
39. Document protocols and modalities
40. Document program effectiveness

### **Treatment Teams and/or Service Providers**

41. Identify the treatment team/community partners, including person(s) served
42. Provide information to team members and community partners concerning available TR/RT services and outcomes
43. Communicate information regarding person(s) served to team members and community partners in a timely and appropriate manner (e.g., behavioral changes, functional status)
44. Coordinate or integrate intervention plan with other service providers and community partners for the person(s) served (e.g., care planning, discharge/transition plan)
45. Develop and provide collaborative services with other team members and community partners as necessary (e.g., co-treatment)

### **Develop and Maintain Programs**

46. Maintain equipment and supply inventory
47. Plan and coordinate support services (e.g., transportation, housekeeping, dietary)
48. Maintain program budget and expense records
49. Develop and distribute schedules (e.g., programs, special events, programming changes)
50. Identify funding sources
51. Conduct an initial and/or on-going organizational/departamental needs assessment for TR/RT service delivery (e.g. populations served, internal and external resources)
52. Conduct ongoing program evaluation

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53. Follow risk management practices

### **Manage Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy Services**

54. Comply with standards and regulations (e.g., government, credentialing, agency, professional)
55. Prepare and update comprehensive TR/RT written plan of operation (e.g., programs, risk management, policies and procedures)
56. Confirm that programs are consistent with agency mission and TR/RT service philosophy and goals
57. Recruit, train, educate, supervise, and evaluate professionals, paraprofessionals and/or volunteers (e.g., plan in-service training, develop staffing schedules)
58. Provide staff development and mentorship, including clinical supervision
59. Develop, implement and/or maintain TR/RT internship program
60. Prepare, implement, evaluate, and monitor TR/RT service annual budget
61. Support research programs or projects
62. Develop and conduct quality improvement plan and report results
63. Write summary reports of TR/RT services
64. Identify, obtain, and manage supplemental funding (e.g., grants, donations, endowments, fundraisers)

### **Awareness and Advocacy**

65. Establish and maintain network with organizations and advocates (e.g., community partners/agencies, universities, health-related professionals, and consumer groups)
66. Advocate for the rights of person(s) served (e.g. access, inclusion, independence, transportation)
67. Provide education to internal and external stakeholders regarding TR/RT services
68. Promote the organization, TR/RT services, and the profession through marketing and public relations
69. Monitor legislative and regulatory changes that impact TR/RT services and person(s) served

## **2014 NCTRC Job Analysis -Knowledge Areas-**

### **Foundational Knowledge (FKW)**

1. Human developmental stages across the lifespan

2. Theories of human behavior and principles of behavioral change (e.g., Maslow's hierarchy, social learning theory, experiential learning model, self-determination theory, stress-coping, societal attitudes)
3. Concepts and models of health and human services (e.g., medical model, community model, education model, health and wellness model, person-centered care model, International Classification of Functioning, recovery model, inclusion)
4. Principles of group dynamics and leadership
5. Legislative and regulatory guidelines and standards (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Joint Commission, CARF)
6. Contributions of play, recreation, and leisure to health, and well-being (e.g., flow theory, benefits, quality of life)
7. Models of TR/RT service delivery (e.g., Leisure Ability Model, Health Protection/Health Promotion Model, TR Service Delivery Model, Health and Well-Being Model)
8. Practice settings (e.g., hospital, long-term care, community-based, schools, home health care)
9. Standards of practice
10. Code of ethics
11. Professional qualifications (e.g., certification, licensure)
12. Cultural competency (e.g., social, cultural, educational, language, spiritual, socioeconomic, age, environment)
13. Cognitive/developmental disorders and related impairments (e.g., dementia, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities)
14. Physical/medical disorders and related impairments (e.g., diabetes, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injury, sensory impairments)
15. Psychiatric disorders and related impairments (e.g., addictions, PTSD)

### **Assessment Process (ASP)**

16. Current TR/RT assessment instruments
17. Interprofessional inventories and questionnaires (e.g., standardized rating systems, developmental screening tests)
18. Secondary sources of assessment data (e.g., records or charts, staff, support system)
19. Criteria for selection and/or development of assessment (e.g., reliability, validity, practicality, availability)
20. Implementation of assessment (e.g., behavioral observations, interviews, performance testing)
21. Sensory assessment (e.g., vision, hearing, tactile)

22. Cognitive assessment (e.g., memory, problem solving, attention span, orientation, safety awareness)
23. Social assessment (e.g., communication/interactive skills, relationships)
24. Physical assessment (e.g., fitness, motor skills function)
25. Affective assessment (e.g., attitude toward self, expression)
26. Leisure assessment (e.g., barriers, interests, values, patterns/skills, knowledge)
27. Functional skills assessment (e.g., access in the community, using social media, using transportation)

### **Documentation (DOC)**

28. Interpretation and documentation of assessment results
29. Individualized intervention plan (e.g., identification of problems, strategies for treatment, modalities)
30. Writing measurable goals and behavioral objectives
31. Progress/functional status (e.g., SOAP, FIM, DARP)
32. Modification of intervention plan (e.g., reevaluation)
33. Discharge/transition plan of person(s) served
34. Required facility documentation (e.g., adverse incidents)

### **Implementation (IMP)**

35. Selection of programs, activities and interventions to achieve the assessed needs of the person(s) served
36. Purpose and techniques of activity/task analysis
37. Activity modifications (e.g., assistive techniques, technology, and adaptive devices)
38. Modalities and/or interventions (e.g., leisure skill/education, assertiveness training, stress management, social skills, community reintegration)
39. Facilitation approaches (e.g., strengths based approach, holistic approach, person-centered, palliative care)
40. Intervention techniques (e.g., behavior management, counseling skills, experiential learning)
41. Risk management and safety concerns

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Given the diversity and varied settings in which TR/RT services are practiced, it becomes a challenge to select terminology that is inclusive of the entire profession. The list provided here represents terms chosen to describe aspects of practice and the persons served. These terms are broad-based and can be applied to all settings and populations served. The intent here is to “include” rather than “exclude” any aspect of the profession.

42. Role and function of other health and human service professions and of interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., co-treatment, consultation, referral)

### **Administration of Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy Service (ADM)**

43. TR/RT service plan of operation (e.g., TRAM model, policy and procedure development)
44. Procedures for program evaluation and accountability (e.g., attendance, participation rates, cost benefit analysis)
45. Quality improvement guidelines and techniques (e.g., utilization review, risk management, peer review, outcome monitoring)
46. Personnel, intern, and volunteer management (e.g., recruitment, supervision, coordination, evaluation)
47. Payment system (e.g. government funding, managed care, private contract, Medicare, Medicaid, ICDM)
48. Facility and equipment management (e.g., maintenance, upgrading, inventory)
49. Budgeting and fiscal management (e.g., fund acquisition, fund management)

### **Advancement of the Profession (ADV)**

50. Professionalism (e.g., professional boundaries, professional appearance, and behavior)
51. Credential maintenance and upgrading professional competencies (e.g., certification, recertification, licensure, continuing education, specializations)
52. Advocacy for person(s) served (e.g., patient/consumer rights, grievance policies, HIPAA)
53. Legislation and regulations pertaining to TR/RT (e.g., related service definitions, Affordable Care Act)
54. Public relations, promotion and marketing of the TR/RT profession
55. Professional associations and organizations
56. Research activities (e.g., research of evidence-based literature, efficacy of TR/RT interventions)
57. Collaboration between higher education and direct service providers (e.g., provision of internships, supporting research)

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**Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy:** all references to TR/RT in this document are intended to be used interchangeably.

**Persons Served:** a patient, client, consumer, participant or resident.

**Individualized Intervention Plan:** an individualized plan of care or intervention for a person served by a qualified TR/RT professional (CTRS) based on assessed strengths and needs, and includes goals, objectives and intervention strategies aimed at fostering desirable and necessary outcomes.

**Treatment/Service Teams:** also referred to as “intervention team”, and “multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary team”. A treatment team is a group of qualified professionals who provide individual and collective treatment to address the needs of a specific individual receiving service.

**Standards of Practice:** statements of professional expectations for service delivery in order to assure systematic provision of recreation therapy services. Such statements are set by the organizations representing the specific profession.

**Inclusion:** a planning process in which individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in all community activities offered to people without disabilities. Inclusion requires providing the necessary framework for adaptations, accommodations and supports so that individuals can benefit equally from an experience.

**Outcomes:** observed changes in an individual’s health status and functional abilities as a result of services. Outcomes must be measurable, achievable, documented, meaningful, and linked to professional intervention.

### **Standards of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities for the CTRS:**

1. possess knowledge of the theories and concepts of therapeutic recreation, leisure, social psychology, and human development as related to the nature and scope of health and human service delivery systems and the ability to integrate these in a variety of settings.
2. possess an essential knowledge of the diversity of the populations including diagnostic groups served within the therapeutic recreation process, including etiology, symptomatology, prognosis, treatment of conditions and related secondary complications. Possess a basic understanding of and ability to use medical terminology.
3. have a thorough understanding of the assessment process utilized within therapeutic recreation practice including, but not limited to, purpose of assessment, assessment domain (including cognitive, social, physical, affective, leisure, background information), assessment procedures (including behavioral observation, interview, functional skills testing, a general understanding of current TR/leisure assessment instruments, inventories and questionnaires and other sources of commonly used multidisciplinary assessment tools, including standardized measures), selection of instrumentation, general procedures for implementation and the interpretation of findings.
4. have a basic understanding of the published standards of practice for the profession of therapeutic recreation and the influence that such standards have on the program planning process.
5. possess detailed knowledge of the intervention planning process, including program or treatment plan design and development, programming considerations, types of programs, nature and scope of interventions, and selection of programs to achieve the assessed needs and desired outcomes of the person served.
6. possess basic knowledge related to the implementation of an individual intervention plan, including theory and application of modalities/interventions and facilitation techniques/approaches.
7. have a fundamental knowledge of methods for documenting and evaluating persons served, programs, and agencies.
8. possess a broad understanding of organizing and managing therapeutic recreation services including, but not limited to, the development of a written plan of operation and knowledge of external regulations, resource management, components of quality improvement, as well as basic understanding of staff/volunteer management.
9. be able to identify and understand the components of professional competency within the realm of therapeutic recreation practice, including requirements for certification, ethical practice, public relations, and the general advancement of the profession.
10. possess fundamental knowledge of how the TR process is influenced by diversity and social environment.
11. possess fundamental knowledge of assistive devices/equipment and activity modification techniques.
12. possess fundamental knowledge of group interaction, leadership, and safety.

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## New Applicant Appeals Procedures

Upon receipt of a decision denying eligibility, an applicant has 45 days to submit an appeal application to NCTRC. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 45 days, the applicant forfeits any right to an appeal at a later date of the decision denying eligibility and will have to reapply as a new applicant meeting all of the current NCTRC Certification Standards. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal at this stage. \* Please note: applicants who gained eligibility prior to degree confirmation will forfeit eligibility to sit for the exam if their application is denied during the certification review process and not successfully overturned during the appeal process.

### GROUNDINGS FOR AN APPEAL

- Demonstrate that the *Certification Standards* were not properly applied; and/or
- Provide information that was not presented previously and which sustains the applicant's eligibility for certification.

### Appeal Instructions

**General Instructions:** All NCTRC Appeal Applications should be submitted by either email or your profile at MY NCTRC LOGIN. Each candidate for an appeal should submit complete and accurate information. All materials submitted to the Standards Review Committee for the appeal become the property of NCTRC and will not be returned. All information submitted in an Appeals Application and in supporting appeal materials must be true and correct. If it is found that false or inaccurate information has been presented, the candidate's request for certification eligibility will be denied and the individual may be denied eligibility for future certification.

**To verify Internship Experience:** If the academic internship experience was not accepted by the NCTRC review, this may be appealed by providing further documentation of an acceptable internship experience. In order to do this, the candidate may be required to submit an official university/college transcript documenting that the internship experience was completed for academic credit. The candidate does not need to submit another transcript if the question of academic credit was not raised in the NCTRC review results.

If the internship experience is not accepted in review, the candidate must provide official documentation of the internship duties, time requirements, and/or supervision by submitting the following: copies of official university/college internship documents (i.e. university/agency contract, student evaluations with signature of the immediate supervisor, official internship logs, etc.), documentation from the agency and the university/college regarding the exact beginning and ending dates of the experience, the number of hours completed per week, the name and certification number of the immediate supervisor, and/or the nature of therapeutic recreation responsibilities completed at the agency.

All letters from the agency should be typed on official agency letterhead and signed by the immediate supervisor at the agency. If the supervisor is no longer employed at the agency of the placement, a written letter may be obtained from the supervisor at his or her current place of employment along with a letter from the placement agency to verify that the supervisor was employed at least 30 hours per week during the placement.

**To verify Academic Coursework Content or Degree(s) Earned:** If credit was not awarded by NCTRC for coursework or degrees completed that the candidate believes should be applied to the certification requirements, the candidate must submit official academic transcripts to verify degree(s) earned and official course outlines to verify any academic coursework to be evaluated as part of the appeals process. Only official course outlines will be reviewed to determine the exact content of academic courses in therapeutic recreation, general recreation, or support coursework. Letters from college/university faculty members may be used to further explain outlines but will not be accepted in place of official outlines. Course catalog descriptions do not provide sufficient information and will not be accepted in place of official outlines.

**To Verify Full-Time Work Experience:** If credit was not awarded for work experience in therapeutic recreation and this is needed for professional equivalency path application, the candidate must document full-time, paid work experience. In order to do this official documentation must be submitted from the personnel department of the employing agency that verifies the full-time work experience with specific duties in therapeutic recreation. This verification should include the candidate's exact job title, the beginning and ending dates of employment in therapeutic recreation, the total number of hours worked per week, and a description of therapeutic recreation job duties. This verification of employment and/or employment responsibilities must be submitted on official agency letterhead from the agency department.

**DO NOT ENCLOSE** confidential patient/client records or information, program or agency brochures, letters from supportive colleagues, audio or videotapes, documentation of continuing education credit, copies of college/university term papers or written projects, or other information not specifically requested above.

**Appeal Review Note:** NCTRC will ensure that applicants are certified according to NCTRC standards. As a result, when reviewing an Appeals Application, if an error has been made in regard to a fact about an applicant's credentials, the Standards

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Review Committee may correct the error, even when the error is not in favor of the applicant.

**Appeal to the Standards Review Committee With Executive Director Discretion to Reverse Decision:** Upon receipt of additional information, the Executive Director shall review the documentation submitted and has the discretion to determine whether the certification eligibility requirements have been met. The Executive Director shall either: (i) reverse the prior denial of certification eligibility and grant eligibility to sit for the examination (notifying the applicant of the decision and terminating the appeal); or (ii) submit the additional documentation to the Standards Review Committee for consideration of the appeal.

**Review and Decision of the Standards Review Committee:** If the Executive Director does not reverse the prior denial of certification eligibility and grant eligibility to sit for the examination, the Executive Director shall forward the applicant's appeals and appeal materials to the Standards Review Committee for review.

The Standards Review Committee shall review the appeal. The scope of the Standards Review Committee's review is not limited to the decision prompting the appeal. The entire application for certification is subject to review. At any time during its review of the appeal, the Standards Review Committee may request additional information from the applicant. Following its review, the Standards Review Committee shall make any of the following determinations:

- That the decision was correct and is affirmed;
- That the decision of the staff is affirmed, but the Standards Review Committee modifies the basis for the decision. A decision modifying an applicant's educational or experiential compliance must be given full effect by the staff;
- That the decision was not correct and that the applicant is eligible to sit for the examination.

Within six weeks of the decision of the Standards Review Committee, NCTRC staff shall advise the applicant in writing of the Standards Review Committee's final decision regarding the appeal. The written notice shall describe specifically the decision of the Standards Review Committee, as well as any findings by the Committee modifying the applicant's educational or experiential compliance. If the Committee and Executive Director find that the applicant has been denied, the applicant will have to reapply as a new applicant meeting all of the current NCTRC Certification Standards. \* Please note: applicants who gained eligibility prior to degree confirmation will forfeit eligibility to sit for the exam if their application is denied during the certification review process and not successfully overturned during the appeal process.

### **Final Appeal to the NCTRC Board of Directors**

A final appeal to the NCTRC Board of Directors is only available for decisions of the Standards Review Committee, which are alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary and capricious manner. No other grounds for appeal is available. All decisions by the Standards Review Committee, which are not alleged to be arbitrary and capricious and which are not appealed to the Board of Directors are final. The applicant may appeal any decision of the Standards Review Committee which is alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary and capricious manner to the NCTRC Board of Directors by submitting a written appeals statement along with the \$25.00 appeals filing fee within 30 days of receipt of the decision of the Standards Review Committee. NCTRC may file a written response to the appeal to the Board of Directors. The NCTRC Board of Directors, by majority vote, shall render a decision on the record, without oral hearing, although additional written documentation may be submitted to support or refute the allegation of arbitrary and capricious decision-making by the Standards Review Committee. The decision of the NCTRC Board of Directors shall be rendered in writing. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be transmitted to the individual by certified mail, return receipt requested or other verifiable method of delivery.

### **NCTRC Exam Reference List**

The following list includes the major therapeutic recreation literature that was available as reference material in the development of the exam items for the national exam for CTRS. NCTRC does not wish to give the impression that these resources are definitive sources for test item development. The resources were used as supportive documentation and reference materials to commonly held practice knowledge. Therefore, please note that NCTRC does not endorse any of these documents. Nor are these references comprehensive. Rather, they are provided as illustrative materials actually referenced in the exam development process and NCTRC recognizes other worthwhile references exist.

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

American Therapeutic Recreation Association. (2013). *Standards for the Practice of Therapeutic Recreation & Self-Assessment Guide*. Alexandria, VA: ATRA.

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- American Therapeutic Recreation Association. (1996). *Recreational Therapy: The Next Generation of Reimbursement*. Hattiesburg, MS: ATRA.
- Anderson, L., Heyne, L. (2012). *Therapeutic Recreation Practice: A Strengths Approach*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Anderson, L., & Kress, C. (2003). *Inclusion: Strategies for Including People with Disabilities in Parks and Recreation Opportunities*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Austin, DR. (2013). *Therapeutic Recreation: Processes and Techniques*. (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Austin, DR., Crawford, ME., McCormick, BP, Van Puymbroeck, M. (2015). *Recreational Therapy: An Introduction*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Austin, D.R., Dattilo, J., & McCormick, B. (2002). *Conceptual Foundations for Therapeutic Recreation*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Austin, DR., Lee, Y. (2013). *Inclusive and Special Recreation: Opportunities for Diverse Populations to Flourish*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Buettner, L., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2003). *Dementia Practice Guidelines for Recreation Therapy: Treatment of Disturbing Behavior*. Alexandria, VA: ATRA.
- Bullock, CC., Mahon, MJ., Killingsworth, CL. (2010). *Introduction to Recreation Services for People with Disabilities: A Person-Centered Approach*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Burlingame, J., & Blaschko, T.M. (2010). *Assessment Tools for Recreational Therapy* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Ravensdale, WA: Idyll Arbor.
- Carter, M.J., Van Andel, G.E., & Robb, G.M. (2011). *Therapeutic Recreation: A Practical Approach* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Dattilo, J. (2002). *Inclusive Leisure Services: Responding to the Rights of People with Disabilities* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Dattilo, J., McKenney, A. (2011) *Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Idyll Arbor. (2001). *Therapy Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Ravensdale, WA: Idyll Arbor.
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- Lawson, L., Coyle, C., & Ashton-Shaeffer, C. (2001). *Therapeutic Recreation in Special Education*. Alexandria, VA: ATRA.
- McGuire, FE., Boyd, RK., Janke, M., Aybar-Damali, B. (2013). *Leisure and Aging Ulysean Living in Later Life*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Urbana, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Mobily, K., & MacNeil, R. (2002). *Therapeutic Recreation: Nature of Disabilities*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. (2017). *NCTRC Certification Standards, Part I-V*. New City, NY: NCTRC
- O'Morrow, G.S, Carter, M.J. (2006). *Effective Management in Therapeutic Recreation Service*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- O'Morrow, GS., Carter, MJ., Smith, CG. (2014). *Effective Management in Therapeutic Recreation Service*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Peterson, C.A., Stumbo, N.J. (2009). *Therapeutic Recreation Program Design: Principles and Procedures* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Porter, H, Burlingame, J. (2006). *Recreational Therapy Handbook of Practice: ICF-Based Diagnosis and Treatment*. Enumclaw, WA: Idyll Arbor, Inc.
- Robertson, T, Long, T. (2008). *Foundations of Therapeutic Recreation*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Shank, J., & Coyle, C. (2002). *Therapeutic Recreation in Health Promotion and Rehabilitation*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Smith, R.W., Austin, D.R., Kennedy, D.W., & Hutchison, L. (2005). *Inclusive & Special Recreation Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.



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- Stumbo, N.J. (2002). *Client Assessment in Therapeutic Recreation Services*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Stumbo, N.J. (2003). *Client Outcomes in Therapeutic Recreation Services*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Stumbo, N.J. (2009). *Professional Issues in Therapeutic Recreation: On Competence and Outcomes*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Stumbo, N., Wardlaw, B. (2011). *Facilitation of Therapeutic Recreation Services: An Evidence-Based and Best Practices Approach to Techniques and Process*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Sylvester, C., Voelkl, J., & Ellis, G. (2001). *Therapeutic Recreation Programming: Theory & Practice*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

## Standards Changes

The following changes to the NCTRC Certification Standards have been approved by the Board of Directors for entry level professional eligibility.

### 2022

**CONTENT COURSE CHANGE – INCREASE IN THERAPEUTIC RECREATION CONTENT COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Effective January 1, 2022, the standard pertaining to the required number of therapeutic recreation content courses will read as follows:

#### *Academic Path*

“A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter credit hours of RT/TR content coursework. A minimum of six (6) courses in RT/TR is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required RT/TR courses may be taught by the applicant as a full-time educator. Content specific RT/TR coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility.”

#### *Equivalency Path A & B*

“A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter credit hours of RT/TR content coursework. A minimum of six (6) courses in RT/TR is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two(2) of the required RT/TR courses may be taught by the applicant as a full-time educator. Content specific RT/TR coursework is recommended as part of the NCTRC professional eligibility requirements. Specific course content in the following areas: a) Assessment; b) TR Process; and c) Advancement of the Profession is highly recommended but not required for eligibility.”

## **NCTRC FEES AND POLICIES**

1. NCTRC certification fees are established by the Board of Directors and subject to change without notice. The current fees are effective as of January 2018.
2. The required fees must accompany each NCTRC application or the application will be returned.
3. Individuals may pay fees by credit card, personal check, money order, or cashier's check. Do not send cash. All checks should be made payable to "NCTRC".
4. Write your full name, address and certification ID on each check, money order, or cashier's check.
5. If you pay by credit card, it is your responsibility to assure payment of the fee. If the credit card information you have submitted is rejected, you will be assessed \$20.00 for the rejected credit card. The subsequent payment must be submitted by either money order or cashier's check.
6. If you pay by personal check, it is your responsibility to assure payment of the fee until the check has cleared the bank. If a personal check is returned by a bank for any reason, the individual will be assessed \$50.00 for the returned personal check, plus the amount of the check. If a personal check is returned for any reason, the review of the application will be discontinued until such time as all fees have been received by NCTRC. Once an application is delayed because of a returned check, the date of receipt is set by the time all fees are paid and held for the next exam review deadline.
7. All fees must be in U.S. dollars. If an individual resides outside of the U.S., the fees must be sent by credit card, money order or cashier's check in U.S. dollars made payable to NCTRC. There is an additional fee of \$25.00 U.S. dollars for submitting a check or money order drawn on a foreign bank. Postal Money orders will not be accepted from foreign

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countries.

8. Each applicant or exam registrant must submit individual payment for fees. Checks payable for more than one applicant will not be accepted.
9. All certification review fees paid to NCTRC are non-refundable, regardless of review decision or withdrawal of the application during the review process. A processing fee will be charged if the applicant requests to have their application returned prior to the review. Please review the certification standards for further exam information and instructions regarding withdrawals and exam cancellations.

**NCTRC CERTIFICATION FEE SCHEDULE: ALL CERTIFICATION REVIEW FEES PAID TO NCTRC ARE NON-REFUNDABLE**

New Application for Professional Eligibility	\$100.00
New Application Prior to Degree Review fee	\$125.00
Returned application processing fee	\$25.00
Pre Application Coursework Review fee	\$35.00
Continuing Education Approval Process Review fee	\$35.00
Exam Registration Fee	\$325.00
Exam Reschedule Fee	\$25.00
Annual Fee to Maintain Professional Eligibility	\$80.00
Professional Eligibility Reinstatement Fee	\$25.00
CTRS Annual Renewal Fee	\$80.00
Reentry Application	\$80.00
Areas of Specialization Fees:	
• Initial Application Fee	\$25.00
• Annual Renewal Fee	\$20.00
• Recertification Fee	\$25.00
CTRS Reinstatement Fee	\$25.00
CTRS Recertification Document Return Fee	\$15.00
CTRS Recertification Fee	\$25.00
CTRS Replacement Pin	\$10.00
Fee for Bank Checks from Foreign Countries	\$25.00
Fee for Returned Check	\$50.00
Fee for Rejected Credit Card	\$20.00