



National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®

Protecting and Promoting Since 1981

Alternative Internship Guidelines

The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) supports quality, experiential learning in therapeutic recreation programs and believes the internship experience is an integral component of professional preparation in therapeutic recreation. Universities and agencies have long recognized the critical value of a structured learning experience under supervision of a qualified practicing professional.

Occasionally, circumstances arise where a well-planned, quality internship experience cannot be completed due to no fault of the student, the university or the internship agency. With the changing environment of health care and human services emergencies periodically arise because of the closure of an agency, the termination of the CTRS staff supervisor due to downsizing, extreme emergencies or severe illness of either the student or the CTRS supervisor. These circumstances may cause the internship experience to be ended or suspended for a period of time. When this happens, the student intern, supervisor, and/or faculty advisor may contact NCTRC for assistance.

To accommodate the above-identified situations, NCTRC has developed the Alternative Internship Guidelines. Using this system, the student, university advisor and internship agency may accommodate the student by helping them find a suitable agency for the continuation of the internship experience. An Alternative Internship will be considered by NCTRC for professional eligibility/academic path requirements if several conditions are met and if the correct documentation is submitted at the time an individual submits their application for professional eligibility.

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS WILL NCTRC CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE INTERNSHIP?

An Alternative Internship may be structured for students who face the following situations during the academic internship experience:

1. The agency is closed without warning and the student cannot continue the internship experience at the original agency site.
2. The agency terminates the employment of the CTRS supervisor and there is no other CTRS supervisor on site to continue the supervision of the student's internship.
3. The agency reduces the employment hours of the CTRS supervisor to less than the minimum number of hours required by NCTRC standards and there is no other CTRS supervisor on site to continue the supervision of the student's internship.
4. The CTRS supervisor resigns his or her position at the agency and there is no other CTRS supervisor on site to continue the supervision of the student's internship.
5. The CTRS supervisor experiences an illness or an event leading to a disability that prevents him or her from continuing employment at the agency and there is no other CTRS supervisor on site to continue the supervision of the student's internship.
6. The student has a serious illness or personal emergency causing the absence or the inability to work at least 20 hours per week, for more than two (2) consecutive weeks.

7. The student who is in military service/reserves is forced to drop below the minimum of 20 hours per week to attend mandatory military training.

There are no other conditions under which an Alternative Internship will be considered by NCTRC. Under other conditions (e.g., the student is dismissed from the internship agency due to failure to meet expectations or for other disciplinary reason, etc.), the student must select a new internship agency and supervisor and begin a new internship that meets all NCTRC standards.

If one of the above emergency situations occurs and the internship meets several other pre-set conditions noted below, the student may seek an Alternative Internship in which to continue the internship experience. The following conditions must be met to structure an Alternative Internship:

1. The student should have completed a minimum of 280 clock hours over a minimum of seven (7) calendar weeks at the original internship site with no less than 20 hours of experience nor more than 45 hours per week.
2. The amount of time lapsed between the end of the student's experience at the initial internship site and the beginning of a placement at the new alternative site should be no more than 60 days.
3. The experience at the initial internship site must meet all other content requirements of the NCTRC Standards and must reflect the Therapeutic Recreation Process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis.
4. At the new internship site selected for the Alternative Internship, the student must plan to complete a minimum of an additional 280 hours over a minimum of seven (7) calendar weeks with no less than 20 hours of experience nor more than 45 hours per week, regardless of how many hours and weeks were completed at the first or original internship site.

WHAT DOES A STUDENT DO TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF AN ALTERNATIVE INTERNSHIP IN A PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION?

NCTRC has developed a specific form and procedure for an applicant to use to submit evidence of completing an Alternative Internship. Please remember, this Alternative Internship will not be pre-approved by NCTRC at the time it occurs. Instead, the student must follow the directions and collect the documentation required on the form. If the student submits all the required documentation and meets all the requirements stipulated in this procedure, the Alternative Internship will be evaluated against all NCTRC internship standards and may be approved during the regular professional eligibility review. If any of the documentation or procedures or conditions is not followed, the Alternative Internship will be denied and the applicant may then submit the Alternative Internship to the Standards Review Committee in the form of an appeal. Further information on the appeals and applications procedures for NCTRC Professional Eligibility may be found in the NCTRC Certification Standards Booklet available at www.NCTRC.org or from the NCTRC office.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE ALTERNATIVE INTERNSHIP FORM

In order for an alternative internship to be considered by NCTRC at the time of application for professional eligibility to sit for the exam, the student must submit the following documentation along with the completed Alternative Internship Form:

- Documentation of the emergency situation that precipitated the end to the original internship experience

- ❑ A completed CTRS supervisor evaluation form with documentation of the student's progress on internship learning objectives from the original internship;
- ❑ A documented plan by the alternative internship CTRS supervisor which outlines the process of orientation to the new alternative site and planned learning activities for the student to continue and complete learning objectives for the internship experience;
- ❑ A signed contract from the Alternative Internship site indicating that the student will be taken in for continuation of the learning activities begun at the original internship experience;
- ❑ A completed CTRS supervisor evaluation form with documentation on the student's progress on internship learning objections at the Alternative Internship site.

REMEMBER, the proposed Alternative Internship will **not be preapproved**. The Alternative Internship Form provides guidance to the student regarding the documentation that must be submitted to NCTRC when the student applies for professional eligibility.

Before completing the Alternative Internship Form, the student, faculty advisor, and the CTRS internship supervisor should familiarize themselves with the NCTRC internship standards. NCTRC internship standards incorporate several criteria for completing an acceptable internship in therapeutic recreation.

The standard states the applicant must complete:

“A minimum 560 hour, 14 consecutive week internship experience in therapeutic recreation services under the supervision of both academic and agency internship supervisors who are NCTRC CTRS certified.”

This standard and its criteria are further explained in the Certification Standards under the heading “Internship Standards Information”. An acceptable internship must meet the following specific criteria for NCTRC to determine the standard has been met.

1. Based on the therapeutic recreation process as defined by knowledge and tasks in the current NCTRC Job Analysis.
2. The primary agency CTRS supervisor must be employed a minimum of 30 hours a week at the sponsoring agency. They must also possess the CTRS credential for one year prior to supervising an internship student.
3. The academic internship supervisor must be an active CTRS at the start of the internship experience.
4. Internships must be accomplished at one agency site for no less than 20 hours and no more than 45 hours each week of the experience. Additionally, internships must be completed for no less than 14 consecutive weeks for a minimum of 560 hours.
5. Internships must be completed over the same dates as the semester or quarter posted on the final transcript in which the student receives academic credit for the experience.
6. Completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework.

It is important to note that the approval of an alternate internship due to emergency circumstances beyond the student's control will authorize NCTRC's acceptance of the original and alternate internships only with respect to three aspects of the NCTRC internship standards. The following criteria of an acceptable internship will be waived upon the review of an alternate internship form within an individual's application for professional eligibility:

- (a) requirement of completing the experience at one agency site,

- (b) 14 consecutive week requirement, and
- (c) requirement of completing the experience under one CTRS supervisor.

An alternate internship will not be preapproved and all other criteria for the internship other than a-c above must still be met. It will be the responsibility of the student applicant to submit all regularly required documentation in the application to NCTRC for certification along with the Alternative Internship Form and documentation, and to describe their professional experiences at both the initial and the alternate internship in his/her application for certification with NCTRC.

To receive an Alternative Internship Form, please contact a member of the Credentialing Team at nctrc@nctrc.org.