

NCTRC

Certification Standards

Information for the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®
and New Applicants



National Council for Therapeutic
Recreation Certification®

Protecting and Promoting Since 1981

Certification Standards are reviewed and evaluated by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) Executive Director, credentialing staff, and Board of Directors every three (3) years, or sooner if legal, regulatory, or other circumstances require. 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 nctrc.org. **The date of this publication is May 1, 2026.**

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.

MILITARY EXTENSION POLICY

The Board of Directors of the NCTRC in an effort to support military personnel will ensure that certificants and applicants ordered to active military duty in support of a “contingency operation” shall have the opportunity to request a suspension of their certification or eligibility requirements with respect to required deadlines and fees. Please contact NCTRC for additional details regarding the NCTRC Military Extension Policy.

NCTRC CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

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. NCTRC reserves the right, however, to comply with subpoenas and other legal orders, demands, and processes that seek the disclosure of NCTRC records, including personal data and other information about applicants and certificants.

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Introduction

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 the therapeutic recreation profession.

Please review the NCTRC Certification Standards. 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.org, or send an email to nctrc@nctrc.org.

Prerequisites And Disciplinary Process

GENERAL

NCTRC's voluntary credentialing program evaluates the educational and experiential qualifications of recreational therapy 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 and Disciplinary Process.
- **To Adhere to NCTRC Application and Notification Requirements.** Each candidate for CTRS certification must truthfully complete 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 nctrc.org, or use a verifiable method of delivery for communications.
- **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 an employing agency, professional organization, or other private or governmental body.
- **To Respect the Property of NCTRC.** The examinations, certificates, digital badges, 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. The use of the registered trademark "CTRS" within an email address or social media username/handle is prohibited. 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, digital badge, 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 to waive, release, discharge, and exonerate 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.

GROUNDINGS FOR ISSUING SANCTIONS

NCTRC may deny certification or recertification, revoke certification or recertification, or issue any other sanctions on the following grounds:

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 or digital badges, (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;
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 an employing agency, 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 WRONGDOING

Allegations of grounds for issuing sanctions 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, who 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 valid basis for disciplinary action, the Executive Director shall take no further action and so apprise the Board and the complainant, if any.

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION

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 grounds for issuing sanctions and may request additional information or documentation. If an application for certification, renewal, recertification, or reentry is pending at the time wrongful conduct is alleged, review of the application by staff shall be suspended until the matter is resolved. 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, and NCTRC may consult with NCTRC legal counsel.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions 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.

NCTRC Process For Administering Complaints

INVESTIGATION, NOTICE, REVIEW AND DECISION BY THE STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 1. Investigation:** If Executive Director's initial assessment of a complaint is that the allegations are not frivolous and state a valid basis for disciplinary action then further investigation of alleged grounds for issuing sanctions may be made by the Executive Director and/or the Standards Review Committee. During an investigation, if the Executive Director or the Standards Review Committee determines that the allegations and facts are inadequate to sustain the imposition of sanctions, then no further action shall be taken with respect to the allegations. The Board and the complainant (if any) shall be so apprised.
- 2. Notice:** A statement of the allegations shall be transmitted to the candidate or certificant by email with delivery confirmation and read receipt requested, or by other verifiable method of delivery, and grounds for issuing sanctions and a statement:
 - a. Of facts constituting the alleged grounds for issuing sanctions;
 - b. That the individual shall have 15 days after receipt of the notice to respond to NCTRC. The individual's response should include a statement of whether the individual admits or disputes the allegations and, if the latter, a narrative of relevant facts and circumstance and defenses, if any. If the notice letter includes questions or a request for additional documentation, the notice letter shall also require the individual to respond to the questions or provide the documentation requested in their response to NCTRC;
 - c. That the truth of allegations or failure to adequately respond may result in the issuance of sanctions including, but not limited to, denial or revocation of certification; and
 - d. For non-certified individuals only, that a failure to respond to the allegations will result in denial of any application submitted to NCTRC. The Standards Review Committee will not decide the matter as described in Section 3. If a non-certified individual who failed to respond to a notice by the Standards Review Committee applies to NCTRC at a future date, the individual's application will be immediately sent to the Standards Review Committee for review of the previously existing allegations and the failure to respond by the non-certified applicant. Staff will not be permitted to process any future application until resolution of the matter by the Standards Review Committee or by appeal, if any.
- 3. Review of Response and Decision:** Following receipt of the response, or expiration of the 15 day deadline to respond, whichever is earlier, either the Executive Director or the Standards Review Committee shall render a written decision containing factual findings, conclusions, and applying sanctions, if any. Notice of the decision shall be sent to the candidate or certificant by email with delivery confirmation and read receipt requested, or other verifiable method of delivery. If the Standards Review Committee determines that a violation has occurred and the Standards Review Committee issues sanctions, the notice to the candidate or certificant shall also include notice of the following:
 - a. That the candidate or certificant shall have 15 days after the date of receipt of the Executive Director or Standards Review Committee's decision to request an appeal on the matter. The candidate or certificant requesting an appeal must send their written request to NCTRC within 15 days after the date of receipt of the decision;
 - b. That if the candidate or certificant does not request an appeal within 15 days, the decision of the Standards Review Committee is final.

FINAL APPEAL PROCEDURES

If the decision of the Standards Review Committee is that the allegations are not established, no further action on the allegations shall occur and the candidate or certificant shall be notified of the decision. If the decision rendered by the Standards Review Committee is not favorable to the candidate or certificant, the candidate or certificant may appeal the decision to the NCTRC Board of Directors by submitting a written appeals statement within 30 days following receipt of the decision of the Standards Review Committee. NCTRC may file a written response to the statement of the candidate or certificant.

The Board of Directors will only review those decisions of the Standards Review Committee which are alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary and capricious manner. No other ground for appeal is available. All decisions by the Standards Review Committee, which are not alleged to be arbitrary and capricious, or are not appealed to the Board of Directors within 30 days are final.

The NCTRC Board of Directors by majority vote shall render a decision on the appeal. The decision of the NCTRC Board of Directors shall be rendered in writing. The decision shall contain factual findings, conclusions, and any sanctions applied, the decision shall be final, and may not be appealed further. The decision shall be transmitted to the candidate or certificant by email with delivery confirmation and read receipt requested.

SUMMARY PROCEDURE

Whenever the Executive Director determines that there is cause to believe that a threat of immediate and irreparable injury to the health of the public (including any individual) exists, the Executive Director shall forward the allegations to the Standards Review Committee. The Standards Review Committee shall review the matter immediately and provide expedited notice and review procedure to the candidate or certificant. Following such notice and opportunity by the individual to be heard, if the Standards Review Committee determines that a threat of immediate and irreparable injury to the public exists, certification may be suspended for up to 90 days pending a full review as provided herein.

RECONSIDERATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION

If eligibility or certification is denied or revoked, eligibility or certification may be reconsidered on the following basis:

1. In the event of a felony conviction directly related to therapeutic recreation practice and/or public health and safety, no earlier than three (3) years from the exhaustion of appeals, completion of probation, or release from confinement (if any), whichever is later;
2. In any other event, no earlier than three (3) years from the final decision of ineligibility or revocation.

The candidate must also set forth additional information as required by NCTRC to substantiate the candidate's fitness for practice. When eligibility has been denied because of felony conviction, the individual bears the burden of demonstrating by clear and convincing evidence that the individual has been rehabilitated and does not pose a danger to others.

Eligibility

PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY

To be awarded the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential, the candidate must meet professional eligibility requirements and pass a knowledge-based exam.

Applications for Professional Eligibility are accepted throughout the year. Each completed application will be reviewed in accordance with NCTRC Certification Standards. The review process for completed applications is typically 4-6 weeks. If your application is incomplete, the application will be denied. All materials submitted to NCTRC as part of the Professional Eligibility Application process will become the property of NCTRC.

Applicants must establish Professional Eligibility to register for the NCTRC Certification exam. Professional Eligibility is valid for five years from the date of issue and applicants must pass the exam to earn the CTRS credential.

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 allows the individual to use the titles "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist®" and "CTRS®" subject to NCTRC Certification Standards.

PRE-APPLICATION COURSEWORK REVIEW (OPTIONAL)

The Pre-Application Coursework Review process is designed to assist potential applicants in determining whether they meet current NCTRC Certification requirements prior to submitting a Professional Eligibility Application. This is an optional process and is not required as part of the Professional Eligibility Process.

PATH TO PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AS A CTRS

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Coursework – Completion of Therapeutic Recreation Content and Supportive Coursework in accordance with the following NCTRC Standards:

- 1. Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses:** A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter credit hours of Recreation Therapy/Therapeutic Recreation (RT/TR) content coursework that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis. A minimum of six (6) courses in RT/TR is required. Two (2) of the required RT/TR courses may be taught by the applicant as an educator in a college/university/academic program. Educators may not enroll in their own courses to meet certification requirements.
- 2. Supportive Courses:** 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/mental health conditions; 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.

The NCTRC Professional Eligibility Application may be initiated after the required coursework is completed.

All required coursework submitted for professional eligibility must be college-level credit bearing coursework and reflected on a transcript. Audited courses will not be accepted to meet the coursework requirements for eligibility.

Degree – Enrollment in or completion of a baccalaureate degree or higher from a college or university verified by an official transcript.

1. Baccalaureate degree or higher, with a major in one of the following:
 - 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);
 - d. a major in another field of study and completion of the required Therapeutic Recreation Content Coursework.
2. 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. NCTRC does not accept photocopies or faxed copies of transcripts. Transcripts are not accepted if previously marked or altered in any manner. Please note that transcripts that cannot be matched with an application will be destroyed.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Professional Experience – Either (1) Academic Internship or (2) Paid Professional Work Experience

(1) Academic Internship – Enrollment in or completion of an internship experience in accordance with the following NCTRC Standards:

- A minimum 560-hour, 14-week internship experience for academic credit, that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Supervision by an agency internship supervisor who must be an active CTRS on the first day of the applicant's internship. Any change in certification status of the supervisor during the internship shall not affect the certification eligibility of an applicant.
 - The supervisory structure for the internship is at the discretion of the academic and agency supervisors.

- Supervision by an academic internship supervisor who must be an active CTRS on the first day of the applicant's internship and must be employed at the college/university.
- The CTRS cannot serve in the capacity of both the academic supervisor and agency supervisor during a given internship experience. Only the agency supervisor can earn continuing education credit for supervising the intern.
- An acceptable internship must be completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation coursework is completed. Verification of the completed internship must appear on the official academic transcript. The majority of therapeutic recreation content coursework is defined as no less than 12 semester or 16 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation content coursework. This requirement applies to coursework completed at the degree earning institution and does not apply to coursework completed after the academic degree is conferred.

OR

(2) Paid Professional Work Experience – Current employment or completion of paid professional work experience in accordance with the following NCTRC Standards:

- A minimum of 5000 hours of paid professional work experience that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study, or
- A minimum of 1500 hours of paid professional work experience that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study, under the supervision of a CTRS for at least 1 hour for every 10 hours worked each week.
 - The supervisor must be an active CTRS on the first day of the applicant's paid professional work experience. Any change in certification status of the supervisor during the paid professional work experience shall not affect the certification eligibility of an applicant.
 - The supervisory structure for the paid professional work experience is at the discretion of the applicant and agency supervisor.

Individuals wishing to become certified through NCTRC and earn the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential must meet specific educational and professional experience requirements, in addition to passing the NCTRC Certification Exam.

Applicants will be awarded the CTRS credential upon demonstration of the following:

- Verification that Education requirements are met in accordance with the NCTRC Standards:
 - Academic degree attainment and completion of required coursework as documented by an official academic transcript.
 - Verification that Professional Experience requirements are met in accordance with the NCTRC Standards:
 - Academic Internship: The applicant must receive academic credit and an evaluative grade for the internship experience as verified by official transcript. The internship experience must be completed over the same dates as the semester or quarter in which the student receives academic credit for the experience.
- OR
- Paid Professional Work Experience: The applicant must submit the Employment Verification Form/Work Experience Supervision Verification Form for the paid professional work experience.
- Receive a passing score on the NCTRC Certification Exam.

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, exam pass rates, and research within the profession and service sectors. 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. See Appendix A for NCTRC Certification Standards changes.

PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY 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 Professional Eligibility application review, the Executive Director may request further information from the applicant. Once review of an application is complete, the applicant is informed 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.

APPEALS OF ELIGIBILITY DENIALS

Upon receipt of a decision denying eligibility, an applicant has 60 days to submit an appeal application to NCTRC. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application within 60 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 Instructions in Appendix D.

Therapeutic Recreation Content Course Information

- NCTRC requires the completion of "content coursework" that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis for certification. A content course is generally interpreted as having a theoretical and/or philosophical focus of study. Practicum, or internship courses are not accepted as content courses.
- The current NCTRC Job Analysis Study 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 Study. 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.
- 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 Study. A therapeutic recreation content course that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis focuses on the theory, philosophy, and/or program content of the field.

COURSES REQUIRING COURSE OUTLINE FOR REVIEW

If therapeutic recreation content courses do not include TR/RT in the title as indicated in the examples below, applicants must submit a course syllabus, description, or outline to demonstrate alignment between learning outcomes and professional knowledge as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis. These courses will be evaluated only if they are accompanied by an official college/university course syllabus, description, outline, and/or faculty letter of agreement at the time of application. The above noted official course/syllabus/description/outline must be dated for the same time in which academic credit was awarded for the course and should include the same prefix and course number on the official transcript.

EXAMPLES OF COURSES WHERE OFFICIAL OUTLINES ARE REQUIRED FOR REVIEW:

- Independent Readings
- Independent Study
- Readings Courses
- Seminar Courses
- Special Projects
- Special Topics
- Thesis or Dissertation
 - 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.

Supportive Coursework Information

NCTRC recognizes the important role of related coursework outside the field of therapeutic recreation as contributing to the knowledge base for practice in therapeutic recreation. NCTRC certification requires specific supportive coursework for professional eligibility.

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).

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. 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. A lab is not required or accepted by NCTRC to meet the three (3) semester or four (4) quarter hours of Anatomy and Physiology. If a single course is used to meet this requirement (i.e.: Human Anatomy and/or Human Physiology), then the course must address anatomy and physiology in equal parts.

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY/MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS REQUIREMENT:

The content area of abnormal psychology/mental health conditions 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. Typical course titles in abnormal psychology/mental health conditions accepted by NCTRC include "Abnormal Psychology," "Psychopathology," "Behavioral Disorders," and "Psychology of Behavioral Conditions."

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN REQUIREMENT:

The content area of human growth and development across the lifespan and developmental theories are deemed essential to an educational foundation in therapeutic recreation. A typical course title accepted by NCTRC is "Human Development Across the Lifespan." The coursework must include development from infancy/birth through older adulthood/death; multiple courses may be used to meet the Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan requirement as long as the entire lifespan is covered in the multiple courses.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a course outline, description, and/or syllabus 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/mental health conditions, or human growth and development across the lifespan.

Examination Information

The NCTRC testing program commenced in 1990 with the adoption of a 200-item written exam. The NCTRC Certification Exam is based on the NCTRC Job Analysis Study 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 works with [Data Recognition Corporation \(DRC\)](#) to deliver the examination for the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential. The exam will be delivered throughout the [Pearson VUE](#) network of test centers along with live remote proctoring. In addition, NCTRC contracts to [Alpine Testing Solutions \(Alpine\)](#) for test development.

DRC is a provider of candidate management services to ensure that candidates' eligibilities, registrations, and published exams are in place and active when scheduled.

Pearson VUE will provide its extensive footprint of secure testing centers and online testing with OnVue for administration of the CTRS exam.

Alpine provides test development, validation, psychometric analysis, examinee data management services and related policy consultation for education, licensure, and professional certification testing programs in a range of sectors.

The NCTRC Certification Exam is offered throughout the year and delivered at Pearson Vue test centers along with live remote proctoring. Please visit <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/nctrc.html> for more information.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Individuals who have a physical or cognitive impairment or limitation that prevents him/her from taking the exam under standard testing conditions may request testing accommodations. All candidates requesting testing accommodation are required to submit a completed accommodation application packet consisting of the Accommodation Request Form and the Professional Accommodation Verification Form. Please visit nctrc.org for the NCTRC Testing Accommodations Guidelines and Applications document.

The Professional Accommodation Verification Form is required to confirm the candidate's testing accommodation request. NCTRC must receive the completed accommodation application packet prior making an exam appointment. There is no extra fee for making these arrangements.

The testing accommodations available include, but are not limited to:

- Reader (Test Center Only)
- Marker/writer (Test Center Only)
- Sign language interpreter for instructions (Test Center Only)
- Separate room
- JAWS
- Double test time (please read "About Taking the Exam with Testing Accommodations" in the following section)
- Extended time by 1.5 (please read "About Taking the Exam with Testing Accommodations" in the following section)
- Other accommodations upon request

Candidates approved for testing accommodations must call Exam Accommodations at 800-466-0450 to schedule an appointment for exam administration.

ABOUT TAKING THE EXAM

The NCTRC Certification Exam is a 3-hour examination available in English, French-Canadian, and Spanish-Modern (Spanish for Latin Americas). During the administration of the examination, each candidate will be presented with an exam form consisting of 120 multiple choice questions, with a mixture of both 3 and 4 option items. 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 the questions, it is recommended that you attempt each question before reviewing marked questions. To ensure the valid development of the NCTRC exam program, a small number of items (17%) 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.

Candidates are Limited to One Exam within 30 days: If a candidate is unsuccessful in achieving the required passing score, they may register for an exam after 30 days provided their professional eligibility is still active with NCTRC through that time.

ABOUT TAKING THE EXAM WITH TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Taking the exam with Extended Time:

The NCTRC Certification Exam contains 120 multiple choice questions, with a mixture of both 3 and 4 option 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 Certification Exam contains 120 multiple choice questions, with a mixture of both 3 and 4 option 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 THE EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

TO SCHEDULE THE NCTRC EXAM

- After submitting the exam registration fee, please visit <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/nctrc.html> to *Log In* or *Create an account* so that you can make an appointment for the NCTRC Exam. Please note that your eligibility to schedule an exam appointment is only valid for 90 days from the date you received your exam authorization email from NCTRC. If you do not make an appointment and/or take the exam within the 90 day eligibility period, your eligibility will expire and you will need to submit a rescheduling fee for a new 90 day eligibility.

RESCHEDULING/CANCELING APPOINTMENT

- Exams can be rescheduled or canceled at least ten days (10 days) before the exam by clicking *Log in* or *Create an account* at <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/nctrc.html>.
- Candidates who reschedule or cancel appointments between 10 days and 48 hours will be assessed a \$25.00 fee (US Funds). Please use your account at <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/nctrc.html> if you need to reschedule or cancel an appointment.

NCTRC EXAM POLICIES

- **Forfeiture of the entire exam fee will occur under the following circumstances:**
 - Failure to arrive at the test center
 - Arrival to the test center more than thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled start time of the exam
 - Failure to log in to your OnVue exam
 - Failure to complete the exam due to candidate technology issues
 - Cancellation of exam less than 48 hours before scheduled appointment
- 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 emailed to NCTRC. The only exception to this policy is if the refund is associated with an exam cancellation of less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled appointment date which then will result in the forfeiture of the entire exam fee.

IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Your first and last name on your exam authorization must match your government issued ID.
- When you arrive at the test center or login to your exam via OnVue, you will be required to present one form of valid, government issued photo and signature bearing identification. Expired IDs 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, please contact NCTRC.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONDUCT AGREEMENT

The contents of the NCTRC Certification Exam are copyrighted, proprietary, and confidential. Disclosure or reproduction of any portion of a NCTRC Certification 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.

GROUNDINGS 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 exam. 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 exam. All of the following behaviors are considered to be misconduct:

- arrival of more than thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled start time of the exam will result in dismissal or inability to test
- 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 DRC/Pearson Vue 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 DRC/Pearson Vue describing his or her observations.
- In either event, when a test administrator reports to DRC/Pearson Vue that a candidate might have committed misconduct during an examination, that candidate's test record is reviewed by NCTRC.
- NCTRC has the right to question any test score whose validity is in doubt. If statistical analysis and/or investigation of the circumstances surrounding the test administration lead NCTRC to believe there is sufficient cause to question the score, NCTRC reserves the right to take action as it deems appropriate. NCTRC expects all individuals to cooperate in any NCTRC investigation or any investigation carried out by an 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, and determination of validity of the examination, pursuant to the filing of appropriate requests to NCTRC's Standards Review Committee.
- **Copyright.** All proprietary rights in the examinations, including copyright, are held by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. 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 a confirmation that the exam was completed at the test center. The score notification will be available on the computer screen and not in written format at the conclusion of the exam. Official written score reports will be available in your account at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nctrc>. 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 100 and 500 along with diagnostic information for the six content areas included in the exam. Content area information is provided to help candidates identify performance level areas when preparing to retest. Candidates should be cautioned there are limitations in the content area information provided. In preparation for retest, NCTRC recommends review of the entire Exam Content Outline.

Each candidate receives a test that conforms to the current exam content outline and is given enough opportunity to demonstrate possession of the knowledge required to practice as an entry-level CTRS. Please visit nctrc.org to access the Exam Content Outline.

HOW IS THE SCORE DETERMINED?

The passing score was established via a systematic procedure (Standard Setting Study) that employed the judgment of representatives on the NCTRC CTRS Registry. This group of CTRSs presented to NCTRC a recommended standard of what entry-level recreational therapists need to know about the tested content and a recommended passing score. The final decision regarding the passing score was made by the NCTRC Board of Directors. Subsequent forms of the examination are statistically equated so that the passing score remains consistent with the standard used from the standard setting study.

NCTRC scaled scores are a conversion of a candidate's raw score (number of items correct) to a scale of 100 to 500 with the passing score set at 293. Scaled scoring is a commonly used method of reporting test scores for many certification programs.

The NCTRC scaled passing score of 293 is not norm referenced or "graded on a curve." NCTRC sets the passing score considering the difficulty of the test and the expectations of newly certified recreational therapists. Passing or failing the exam is not dependent on how your score compares to other candidates.

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.

TESTING EXPERIENCE COMPLAINTS

Candidates with complaints or comments about testing center facilities and/or supervision, examination content, or any other matter related to the testing program should contact the DRC/Pearson Vue candidate services team to report any/all issues to the representative. The representative will contact the appropriate team to investigate the complaint, which can take 7-10 business days to complete, depending on the type of complaint received.

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 enables 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 and exam program.

NCTRC has completed a comprehensive Job Analysis in 1987, 1997, 2007, 2014, and in 2021 NCTRC completed its fifth comprehensive Job Analysis Study. The list of tasks 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 the therapeutic recreation profession. Please see Appendix B for the 2021 Job Analysis Study.

A summary of the standards of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the CTRS is contained in Appendix C.

NCTRC Exam Reference List

The NCTRC Exam Reference List includes the major therapeutic recreation literature that was used as reference material in the development of the exam items for the NCTRC Certification Exam. These resources are not the definitive sources for test item development, but 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. To review the NCTRC Exam Reference list, please refer to nctrc.org.

Renewal, Recertification And Reentry

ANNUAL RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE APPLICATION AND FEE

Each year of the five year certification cycle, each Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) must submit an Annual Maintenance Application and fee as designated by the Board of Directors. The Annual Maintenance Application and fee must be submitted by the expiration date. In the fifth year of the certification cycle, the maintenance fee must be submitted as part of the recertification application.

INACTIVE CERTIFICATION

If the certificant's Annual Maintenance Application and fee are not submitted to NCTRC by the expiration date, the certification will become inactive and the certificant will not be able to use the "CTRS" designation. Inactive professional certification may be reinstated at any time during the five-year certification cycle. Inactive certification may not be reinstated following expiration of the five-year certification cycle. During any cycle of time that the certification is inactive, the individual is prohibited from: (i) representing that the individual is a "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist" or "CTRS"; and (ii) agreeing to serve as a supervisor for a proposed internship requiring a supervisor that is NCTRC CTRS certified.

CTRS RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The CTRS recertification process allows professional certificants to maintain continuing professional competence in therapeutic recreation by demonstrating specified levels of knowledge, skills, or ability not only at the time of initial certification but throughout an individual's professional career. It is each certificant's responsibility to collect and maintain all recertification materials over their five-year cycle of certification. Certificants must document specific continuing education credits as deemed acceptable by the Recertification Standards and an appropriate number of professional experience hours in therapeutic recreation or successfully complete the NCTRC Exam. The decision for a five-year recertification cycle was based on expert opinion and the results of the 1987 Job Analysis. This initial decision was reinforced by subsequent Job Analysis studies and reviews that indicated that the five year recertification cycle correlates directly with observed changes within the profession of therapeutic recreation. All recertification hours must be earned during the recertification cycle. No credit is given for any continuing education, professional experience, or reexamination earned prior to or following the end of the certification cycle. **It is also the certificant's responsibility to submit a completed recertification application before the end of the five-year recertification cycle. The recertification application must include the annual maintenance and recertification fee. The certificant should also be prepared to submit official documentation pertaining to all completed continuing education hours and professional experience if called upon to do so during the audit process.**

Recertification Options: Each CTRS must complete one of the two options to renew certification at the end of the five-year cycle.

Option	CTRS Recertification	Recertification with Specialization Area Designation
1. Professional Experience and Continuing Education in Therapeutic Recreation	• Minimum of 480 hours of professional experience • Minimum of 50 hours of continuing education	• Minimum of 5,000 hours of professional experience in the specialization area designation • Minimum of 75 hours of continuing education in the specialization area designation
2. Reexamination	• Passing score on the NCTRC Certification Exam	• Minimum of 5,000 hours of professional experience in the specialization area designation • Minimum of 75 hours of continuing education in the specialization area designation

SPECIALIZATION AREA DESIGNATION

Through CTRS Specialization Area designation, certificants are offered the opportunity to be recognized for their advanced knowledge and skill in a specialized area of practice. Recreational therapy professionals who acquire a higher level of education, knowledge and advanced skills in specific areas of specialization stand out among their peers. The Specialization Area would be noted on their current certification to indicate experience and focused continuing education in that area. This process is available as an added option to those certificants submitting their recertification application.

NCTRC awards recognition in the following seven areas of specialization denoting experience and focused continuing education to enhance recreational therapy practice. The areas of specialization are broadly defined as follows:

- **Adaptive Sports and Recreation**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to, knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the use of equipment, adaptations and/or assistive devices, accommodations, coaching, and training (of both recreational and competitive adaptive sports), through recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, so that individuals with disabilities, impairments, and/or conditions are fully enabled to maximize their potential and actively participate in sports, recreation, and physical activity equally with those without a disabling condition within diverse settings. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within community settings, hospitals, schools, rehabilitative centers, and other areas of service.

- **Behavioral Health**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, for the diseases, disorders, conditions, and impairments related to emotional and cognitive functioning within human behavior. This area includes mental and substance abuse disorders that directly impact functioning. It is recognized that this specialty area includes a multitude of specific diseases and impairments that occur throughout the human lifespan. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within hospitals, rehabilitative centers, community-based clinics, and other areas of service.

- **Community Inclusion Services**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to, knowledge, skills and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, for a wide array of population groups that represent a range of disabilities, impairments, and conditions. Inclusion is a process that enables individuals with disabilities to have the opportunity to participate at their highest level of functioning, in the least restrictive environment, in all recreation and community activities offered to people without disabilities. Inclusion requires providing the necessary adaptations, modifications, accommodations and support through recreational therapy services, so that all individuals can benefit equally from a community-based experience. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within community settings, hospitals, schools, rehabilitative centers, and other areas of service.

- **Developmental Disabilities**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, for the diagnoses, conditions, and impairments that manifest prior to adulthood and directly impact typical and predictable human development in three or more major life functions. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within medical centers, educational facilities, community-based programs, and other areas of service.

- **Geriatrics**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, for the diseases, conditions, and impairments primarily associated with aging adults. These conditions often impact the physical, social, psychological, and cognitive functioning of older adults. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within hospitals, geriatric rehabilitative centers, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living & retirement communities, as well as adult-day and in-home support programs.

- **Pediatrics**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to knowledge, skills, and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, including diseases, conditions, and impairments, and their impact on the development of play, leisure, and social skills for children and youth. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within schools, hospitals, rehabilitative centers, medical day care, community-based nursing facilities, and other areas of service.

- **Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation**

This area of specialization includes, but is not limited to, knowledge, skills, and abilities related to recreational therapy services, as defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis Study, for individuals presenting with diseases, conditions, and impairments such as spinal cord injury, stroke, brain injury, orthopedic, or neuromuscular skeletal disorders that require physical medicine and/or rehabilitative care. It is recognized that this area of specialization includes a multitude of specific diseases and impairments that occur throughout the human lifespan. Recreational therapy services are usually provided within hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, physical medicine and rehabilitation centers, community-based clinics, and other areas of service.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE COMPONENT

If this component is selected for recertification, a minimum of 480 hours of therapeutic recreation professional experience must be earned within the five-year recertification cycle. The hours can be accumulated through the performance of one or several of the following professional roles:

Direct Service Provider: delivers service directly to clients or groups as a therapeutic recreation specialist by performing assessments, developing and implementing individual programs and treatment plans, documenting the assessments and interventions, working on an interdisciplinary team, performing outreach activities, etc.

Supervisor: supervises therapeutic recreation personnel in the direct delivery of service to clients.

Administrator: administers a department or a division that includes therapeutic recreation.

Educator: teaches courses or a program in therapeutic recreation at a university, college, etc.

Consultant: performs consulting services in therapeutic recreation for organizations, educational institutions, agencies or corporations.

Professional Service (Paid or Volunteer): includes professional activities such as service on professional boards, councils, legislative work, standards development, curriculum development, research activities etc., as this service relates to therapeutic recreation.

Volunteer: volunteer services performed in any of the various roles described above.

Please note that the professional experience must align with the NCTRC Job Analysis Study. NCTRC requires verification of professional experience through the personnel department or immediate supervisor.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMPONENT

The CTRS is required to complete educational opportunities to maintain and enhance knowledge and skill to assure continuing competence in the practice of recreational therapy. These include completing continuing education, specifically at professional conferences, workshops, symposia and seminars. The CTRS may earn continuing education credits for internship and paid professional work experience supervision, authoring professional publications, giving professional presentations, and completing academic courses. The CTRS may also earn continuing education credit for participating in officially sanctioned NCTRC test development, item writing and other certification test related activities.

The content of continuing education opportunities must relate directly to the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study. Continuing education is measured according to actual instructional time as identified on documentation submitted. Each continuing education session must be 30 minutes or longer. Sessions of less than 30 minutes will not be accepted by NCTRC, regardless of the content. If you require clarification on converting your continuing education units/points to hours, contact NCTRC.

NCTRC offers an optional pre-approval process of both pending and/or completed continuing education content prior to the submission of a formal recertification or specialization area designation application. This process allows for formal early confirmation of continuing education to certificants who are not certain if specific continuing education opportunities will meet NCTRC Recertification and/or Specialization Area Designation requirements. This process is available to all current CTRSs and can be utilized at any time during the five-year certification cycle. This is an optional process and is not required for Recertification Review. Please note that the submission of the Recertification - Education and Work Experience application will still be required in order to complete the recertification process.

The standards require that if requested to do so as part of the audit process, a CTRS must submit an official document(s) of continuing education credit which indicates their name, attendance date (which must be within the 5 year cycle), title of the course or program and contact hours (it does not have to be awarded in CEU credit). If the CTRS is unable to obtain such a document, then the sponsor or instructor of the program must provide a written statement including all the necessary information mentioned above, on agency letterhead.

Continuing Education credit earned at conferences, symposia, seminars, etc. are automatically accepted for Recertification if the continuing education was pre-approved by NCTRC via the CE Pre-Approval Programs. All other continuing education credit earned by CTRSs must be submitted to NCTRC in accordance with the NCTRC Recertification Standards. All earned continuing education credit must be based upon the current ANSI/IACET Standard for Continuing Education and Training. The title and content of the course or program, as listed on the official document, is critical to whether it can be used toward NCTRC Recertification. If it is not, the certificant will need to submit the program brochure with the continuing education materials. Certain continuing education will not be accepted toward NCTRC recertification. This includes CPR, First Aid, Infectious Disease Control, Life Saving, and activity or other skill-based courses. Intervention skill sessions/courses will be accepted only when the majority of the focus is on using the therapeutic recreation process.

ACADEMIC COURSES FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT

An individual may earn continuing education credits for an academic course taken for credit or taken as an audited course. Continuing education credits for completing academic courses for credit and audited academic courses are as follows:

Academic courses for credit:			Audited academic courses:		
1 SEMESTER CREDIT =	15 CE HOURS =	15 CREDITS	1 SEMESTER CREDIT =	8 CE HOURS =	8 CREDITS
1 QUARTER CREDIT =	10 CE HOURS =	10 CREDITS	1 QUARTER CREDIT =	5 CE HOURS =	5 CREDITS

The content of academic courses must be linked directly to the therapeutic recreation knowledge areas delineated in the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study.

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, INTERNSHIP SUPERVISION, AND SUPERVISION OF PAID PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE APPLICANTS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT

A certificant may request credit for professional publications and presentations. Credit will not be given for material presented multiple times or for the same publication duplicated in different formats. The certificant may only receive credits for either making the presentation or attending the educational session, but not for both.

	Credits
Published professional book (original or subsequent editions)	25
Published editor of a professional book or professional journal	15
Published professional book chapter (original or subsequent editions)	15
Authored article in refereed journal	15
Published book review	10
Internship Supervision credit (maximum of 15 credits)	5

	Credits
Supervision of Paid Professional Work Experience (maximum of 6 credits)	2
Editorial review of professional journal article	5
Published research abstract or proceeding	5
Published article in non-refereed professional state/provincial, regional, national, or international magazine	5
Published professional newsletter article	2
Presentation at professional conference/online training (credits per presenter per hour)	2
Presentation of a research or program poster	2

No more than 25 credits of the Continuing Education Component will be awarded for publications, presentations, internship supervision, and supervision of paid professional work experience. The content of publications and presentations must be directly related to the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.

The following are not accepted as professional presentations:

- Agency presentations or in-services that are directly related to one's job duties.
- Community service presentations to service clubs and parent's groups.

The table below shows the type of continuing education accepted and the "acceptable proof" that must be submitted for the recertification audit. Continuing education will not be awarded without official documentation, as described below.

DOCUMENTATION NEEDED FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS FOR RECERTIFICATION

Category	Description	Acceptable Proof for Hours
Continuing Education Programs From Conferences & Workshops	Programs, courses, symposia with content directly related to Job Analysis Study. Examples of continuing education sources include: hospital/agency education, teleconferences/ audio seminars, home study and on-line programs.	Official documentation of continuing education must include name, attendance dates, and title of course or program, contact hours, or written certification by the instructor. If the course or program title is not reflective of the Job Analysis Study, a content outline should be submitted.
Academic Credit Courses	Academic courses offered by an educational institution. On-line and correspondence courses are also acceptable. Content must relate to Job Analysis Study.	Official transcript. If the course title does not appear to be related to the Job Analysis Study, course outline should be submitted.
Publications*	The content must relate to Job Analysis Study. The CTRS must be author, co-author, or editor.	Copy of publications or a copy of the title page, table of contents and publication date. If publication is in the process of being published, a publisher's notice of acceptance is permissible.
Presentations*	Seminars, conferences, or original papers. The CTRS can be a guest lecturer, primary presenter or a panel participant. Credit will not be given for repeat or multiple presentations of the same material. Content must relate to Job Analysis Study.	Submit evidence of presentation (i.e., program announcement, brochure), date, exact number of contact hours, and a letter confirming that the presentation was completed (i.e., thank you letter, session evaluation).
Poster Presentations*	Credit will not be given for repeat or multiple poster presentations of the same material. Content must relate to Job Analysis Study.	Submit evidence of presentation (program announcement, brochure and letter confirming the presentation was completed).
Internship Supervision*	Credit awarded for supervision of competency-based internship.	Copy of NCTRC Internship Supervision Continuing Education Form (Maximum of 15 credits/cycle).
Supervision of Paid Professional Work Experience*	Credit awarded for supervision of paid professional work experience.	Copy of NCTRC Work Experience Supervision for Continuing Education Form (Maximum of 6 credits/cycle).
Professional Work Experience	Professional experience based upon the Job Analysis Study.	Submit NCTRC Employment Verification Form for the minimum requirement of professional experience that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.

*No more than a total of 25 continuing education hours in Publications, Presentations, Internship Supervision, and Supervision of Paid Professional Work Experience will be allowed toward recertification requirements.

REEXAMINATION COMPONENT

If the reexamination component is chosen, the certificant will be required to take the current examination used for professional level certification. The same passing score will be required on the test as is required with new candidates. The certificant will also be required to pay the current test administration fee, in addition to the required annual maintenance fee.

Certificants may take the NCTRC exam for recertification during the final three (3) months of their certification cycle. If a passing score is not obtained, the CTRS certification will be forfeited. An individual who does not pass the exam for recertification will have the opportunity to regain the CTRS credential by taking the exam through the Reentry program.

RECERTIFICATION INTERPRETIVE GUIDELINES

- **Academic Courses for Credit:** Coursework taken at a college or university for academic credit and documented by an official transcript. Course content must be linked directly to the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- **Activity Skill Session/Course:** An activity skill session/course is where the focus of learning is on the experiential aspects of the activity. The majority of educational content is on learning, practicing, and/or participating in the activity skill.
- **Audited (not graded) Academic Coursework:** Audited academic coursework is taken at a college or university and no academic credit is awarded. No grade is recorded, and tests or examinations are not required. An official transcript from the college or university must indicate "audit." Course content must be directly linked to the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- **Continuing Education Provider or Authority:** NCTRC accepts the continuing education from education providers who follow the ANSI/IACET Standards for Continuing Education and Training, whether they are officially sanctioned by ANSI/IACET or not.
- **Guest Lecturer at a College or University:** Presenting a lecture to an undergraduate or graduate class on a topic related to the NCTRC Job Analysis Study. The lecture must be a minimum of 30 minutes and must be verified by the College or University.
- **ANSI/IACET (International Association for Continuing Education and Training):** The ANSI/IACET Standard for Continuing Education and Training is the internationally recognized organization for standards and certification for continuing education and training. The ANSI/IACET Criteria and Guidelines for Quality Continuing Education and Training Programs are available at iacet.org. NCTRC uses these criteria and guidelines as an indicator of quality continuing education.
- **Intervention Skills Session/Courses:** A therapeutic recreation intervention skill session/course may incorporate an activity skill, but the majority of the focus is on using the therapeutic recreation process through facilitation techniques that restore, remediate and/or rehabilitate functioning.
- **Job Analysis Study:** defines the knowledge and tasks used by a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. The content of the study represents the TR process and informs the CTRS about content for continuing education and job tasks for professional experience to meet recertification requirements.
- **Professional Level Education:** It is required that CTRSs will complete professional training and education to assure continuing competence in the practice of recreational therapy.
- **Professional Service Experience:** May occur within a therapeutic recreation professional organization.
- **Volunteer service for a professional organization.** May include committee work for a professional therapeutic recreation organization at the local, state/provincial, regional or national or international level, committee work for a therapeutic recreation conference, being a member of a board of directors for a professional therapeutic recreation organization. The volunteer service must be in therapeutic recreation and a log must be kept to verify the hours of volunteer service. The log must be verified by the professional organization. A completed NCTRC Employment Verification Form will need to be submitted.
- **Volunteer service within a therapeutic recreation program.** Volunteer professional service may be delivered directly to clients (implementing a therapeutic recreation program) or may be a non-direct service (supervision or administration of therapeutic recreation personnel). Volunteer professional service may also be in the form of consultation of therapeutic recreation practice for organizations, educational institutions, agencies or corporations. For individuals who volunteer in a therapeutic recreation program, an official volunteer log should be kept of the exact dates and times of volunteer hours in therapeutic recreation. At the time of recertification, submit a completed NCTRC Employment Verification Form.

- Published professional book: Publications and/or texts using theoretical/conceptual content that relates to the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Published editor of a professional book or professional journal: Editing a book or a journal related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study. Name of editors must be published in the book or journal or supported by letter from the publisher.
- Published professional book chapter: Publishing an original or revised chapter in a book related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Authored article in refereed journal: Authoring articles related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study published in a refereed journal using blind, peer review of manuscripts.
- Published book review: A book review published in a refereed journal.
- Editorial review of professional journal article: Editorial review of professionally prepared manuscript submitted for publication in a peer-refereed journal related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Published research abstract or proceeding: A published synopsis of original research or conceptual theory that reflects a presentation of the original work related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Published article in non-refereed professional state/provincial, regional, national, or international magazine: Published articles in a state, regional or national professional publication related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Published professional newsletter article: A published article that discusses a topic related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.
- Presentation at professional conferences: Presentations made at a professional conference, workshop or seminar with content related to TR practice. Presentations earn 1 credit for each 30 minutes of lecture. When there are multiple presenters each presenter may earn 1 credit for each 30 minutes of lecture. Credit will only be awarded once for each original presentation. Minor changes to the session content will be considered a repeated presentation, and will not be awarded credit.
- Presentation of a research or program poster: A poster presentation is the sharing of research, conceptual, or programmatic information through a visual display. Presenters interact with conference attendees during the display time. The poster presentation at a conference must relate to TR practice and may be either refereed/juried or non-refereed/non-juried.
- Refereed or Juried Publication: Publications which use blind review, peer review and editing for manuscript critique.
- Reprinted Publication: An article or abstract printed in multiple publications (state society magazine, professional newsletter, professional journal) with no significant changes made to the content of the article or abstract. Credit is not given for reprinted or multiple publications of the same material.
- Internship Supervision: An internship experience that includes professional training and results in documented student competence in each of the critical areas of the TR process (APIED). Each internship experience is awarded five (5) CE credit hours. A CTRS agency supervisor can supervise a maximum of three (3) CE credit earning experiences for a maximum of 15 credit hours per recertification cycle. Please refer to the NCTRC Internship Supervision for Continuing Education form.
- Supervision of Paid Professional Work Experience: Supervision of paid professional experience that aligns with the TR process and the NCTRC Job Analysis. Supervisors are required to provide 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours worked by the applicant. Each supervision earns two (2) CE credit hours. A CTRS can supervise more than one applicant at a time, and may claim up to three (3) of these experiences for a maximum of six (6) CE hours. Please refer to the NCTRC Work Experience Supervision for Continuing Education Form.

RECERTIFICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES

NCTRC will notify each certificant prior to the end of their five-year certification cycle. Recertification applications may be submitted no earlier than 12 months prior to the certification expiration date. Recertification applications submitted after the respective expiration dates will enter a 60 day grace period. During this grace period the certificant must pay a late submission fee in addition to the annual maintenance and recertification fees prior to review of their application. If the recertification application is submitted after the 60 day grace period, it will not be accepted; the applicant would need to use the Reentry Program to regain their CTRS status.

Only professional NCTRC staff holding the CTRS designation will review recertification applications to determine whether NCTRC's CTRS recertification criteria are met. At any time during the recertification application review, the Executive Director may request further information from the applicant. Upon submission of the recertification application, a random percentage of applications will be selected for audit. Please see Appendix E for additional information regarding the audit process.

Once review of an application is complete, the certificant is informed of either (i) the decision to grant recertification to the certificant, or (ii) an adverse decision on the recertification application. The recertification decision will be emailed to the certificant after the completion of the review. Individuals who are denied recertification have the right to appeal the decision or regain their CTRS status via the Reentry program.

RECERTIFICATION APPEAL PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of an adverse determination, a certificant has 60 days to submit an appeal application. If a certificant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 60 days, the certificant forfeits any right to an appeal of the adverse determination. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal at this stage. Please see Recertification Appeals Procedures in Appendix F for complete information on how and when to file an appeal for the denial of an application for Recertification. Individuals whose Recertification denial decision is not overturned by the appeal process may regain their CTRS status via the Reentry program or by applying as a new applicant.

RECERTIFICATION EXTENSION

Extension of Recertification Cycle. In the case when a serious health condition or extreme personal emergency has prevented an individual from completing all recertification requirements, a request for extension may be made in writing to the Standards Review Committee within 60 days of the recertification application deadline. A detailed description of the serious health condition or extreme emergency must be accompanied by official documentation regarding the circumstance. The extension application and pertinent documentation will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Standards Review Committee, and an extension of up to one year will be considered. Once a decision is rendered, notification will be emailed to the applicant from the NCTRC office. If the extension request is granted a recertification application must be submitted by the date established by the Standards Review Committee. The recertification application and all continuing education materials will be due at that time. The NCTRC exam may be taken for recertification during the extension period. Please visit nctrc.org for more information on the exam registration process.

If an extension is granted for medical or health related issues, submission of an Authorization and Attestation form completed by the treating professional confirming fitness to practice will be required. This form may be submitted at the time the extension is granted, or when the recertification application is submitted. The determination of active certification status will be based on the receipt of this form. **NCTRC reserves the right to withhold active certification status for those individuals who are unable to provide the signed Authorization and Attestation form at the time that the extension is granted.**

Reentry Requirements

Reentry is a process whereby certain individuals whose certification recently expired, may qualify for eligibility to take the NCTRC Certification Exam, without needing to meet the current educational and experiential requirements for initial certification. Reentry certification eligibility is limited to only those candidates who:

1. Were CTRS certified within two years prior to their application for reentry; and
2. Apply for reentry eligibility to take a CTRS certification examination that is scheduled to be administered within the two years immediately following expiration of their CTRS certification.

Reentry candidates are subject to all requirements of, and must maintain compliance with, the NCTRC Certification Standards, except they shall not be required to demonstrate that they meet the current educational and experiential requirements for initial certification. The exam must be completed before expiration of the two-year period following expiration of their CTRS certification. Reentry candidates must pay all fees for test registration and any delinquent annual fees from the last recertification cycle, and meet all other requirements to take the certification examination.

Reentry candidates who successfully pass the examination will be granted CTRS certification for another five-year cycle, subject to the requirements of the NCTRC Certification Standards. Reentry candidates who do not pass the examination may apply again to sit for the examination under these reentry provisions, so long as they take the examination during the two-year period immediately following expiration of their CTRS certification. Reentry candidates who do not pass the examination during the two-year cycle immediately following expiration of their CTRS certification will not be certified under these reentry provisions.

Options To Regain Certification For Individuals Previously Certified Who Are Outside The Reentry Period

OPTION 1 - For individuals who:

1. were certified in the past,
2. are outside the 2-year reentry period, and
3. meet the current Professional Eligibility requirements related to academic preparation, the following option is available to regain active certification status.

Academic Coursework: Applicant meets current Professional Eligibility requirements for both Supportive and TR Content Coursework that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis.

Professional Experience: The internship or professional work experience that the applicant submitted in the past to earn their CTRS credential will suffice; no additional professional experience is required at this time.

CTRS Exam: Applicant is required to receive a passing score on the NCTRC Certification Exam.

OPTION 2 - For individuals who:

1. were certified in the past,
2. are outside the 2-year reentry period, and
3. do not meet the current Professional Eligibility requirements for both Supportive and TR Content Coursework, the following option is available to regain active certification status.

Academic Coursework: Applicant may choose to take the additional TR Content and/or Supportive courses needed to meet the current professional eligibility requirements or they may submit evidence of completed continuing education in lieu of coursework needed, as long as the following requirements are met.

- 45 hours of continuing education per each academic course (3 semester or 4 quarter credits) needed to meet current Professional Eligibility requirements.
- CE must focus on the course content needed
 - Continuing education for TR Content courses must focus on the NCTRC Job Analysis Report.
 - Continuing education for Supportive Coursework (Anatomy and Physiology, Abnormal Psychology, and Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan) must align with the current Supportive Coursework standards.
- Continuing education must be taken within the past 5 years and align with the content of the needed course(s).

Professional Experience: The internship or professional work experience that the applicant submitted in the past to earn their CTRS credential will suffice; no additional professional experience is required at this time.

CTRS Exam: Applicant is required to receive a passing score on the NCTRC Certification Exam.

Emergency Situations During The Reentry Period

The NCTRC Executive Director and the NCTRC Standards Review Committee (and, in limited cases, the Chair of the Board of Directors) have discretion in deciding whether to grant an extension. Only reentry candidates who have registered for and missed the last exam offered during their reentry cycle may be granted an extension of the reentry cycle. The reentry candidate must notify NCTRC of the event within 60 days of the event's occurrence. If NCTRC extends a candidate's reentry deadline cycle, the candidate must register, pay for, and comply with all requirements and deadlines as established by NCTRC and noted in the communication regarding this matter. During the extended reentry cycle, the candidate is not certified by NCTRC and may not represent that they hold NCTRC certification.

NCTRC Fees And Payment Policies

Please see Appendix G for Information on NCTRC Fees and Payment Policies.

Appendix A: Standards Changes

As of July 1, 2025, there are no pending changes to the NCTRC Certification Standards. Please continue to check back at nctrc.org for any updates.

Appendix B: Job Analysis Study

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND JOB TASKS FOR THE CTRS

Knowledge Domain 1: Professionalism

Job Task Area 1.01. Develop professional relationships

Including, but not limited to:

- Communicate with interdisciplinary teams (e.g., team meetings, care/treatment planning, client reviews, etc.)
- Educate internal/external stakeholders about the scope of RT/TR practice (e.g., administration, board of directors, third party payers, funders, interdisciplinary team, service providers, families, etc.)
- Advocate for client's rights with interdisciplinary team, clients, and families

Job Task Area 1.02. Maintain professional competency

Including, but not limited to:

- Understand trends in RT/TR practice (e.g., evidence-based practice, etc.)
- Apply concepts of cultural competence/intelligence (e.g., implicit bias, cultural differences, diversity and inclusion, etc.)
- Maintain professional qualifications (e.g., continuing education, staff development, credentials, licensure, additional credentials, etc.)
- Participate in internal/external committees (e.g., quality improvement teams, professional organizations, etc.)
- Comply with professional Code of Ethics
- Comply with professional Standards of Practice

Knowledge Domain 2: Assessment

Job Task Area 2.01. Conduct the assessment process

Including, but not limited to:

- Establish a therapeutic relationship with clients (e.g., explain characteristics, professional vs personal boundaries, etc.)
- Apply knowledge of diagnostic and developmental characteristics (e.g., cognitive/developmental impairments, physical disabilities, psychiatric impairments, etc.)
- Determine assessment tools to establish outcomes (e.g., standardized, interprofessional, FIM, MDS, etc.)
- Gather primary data across functional domains (e.g., sensory, cognitive, social, physical, affective, leisure, etc.)
- Gather secondary data (e.g., support system, charts, medical records, etc.)
- Use findings from data gathered to determine strengths and limitations, including barriers to leisure participation (e.g., social, environmental, physical, etc.)

Job Task Area 2.02. Apply assessment data to plan care

Including, but not limited to:

- Prioritize client needs and strengths
- Create goals and objectives (e.g., outcomes) based on assessment data
- Communicate assessment data to interdisciplinary team/ other service providers and client

Knowledge Domain 3: Planning

Job Task Area 3.01. Develop individualized plan of care

Including, but not limited to:

- Utilize RT/TR service delivery models (e.g., Leisure Ability, Health Protection/Health Promotion, Health and Well-Being Model, etc.)
- Utilize theories of practice (e.g., person-centered, medical model, social model, positive psychology, etc.)
- Align goals and/or objectives to support service delivery (e.g., one-to-one, group interventions, types of modalities, facilitation techniques, etc.)

Job Task Area 3.02. Design program services

Including, but not limited to:

- Design programs based on client needs, interests, and abilities
- Engage in logistical program planning (e.g., transportation, space, supplies, accessibility, etc.)
- Select intervention techniques, approaches, and modalities (e.g., social skill training, community reintegration, palliative care, behavior management, etc.)
- Determine activity modifications (e.g., assistive technology, adaptive devices, and adaptive techniques, etc.)
- Use Activity/Task analysis to provide quality services
- Identify formative evaluation techniques to determine effectiveness of specific programs (e.g., client survey, debriefing, etc.)

Knowledge Domain 4: Implementation

Job Task Area 4.01. Deliver program services

Including, but not limited to:

- Explain purpose of intervention/program
- Determine the steps needed to implement program services (e.g., room arrangements conducive to respective intervention, staffing ratios, environmental and programming accessibility, barriers to participation, etc.)
- Establish facilitation structure and leadership approach
- Implement program plan (e.g., using adaptive recreational equipment, strategic partnering, group dynamics, adapt in the moment, conduct co-treatments with team members, etc.)
- Monitor effectiveness of intervention/program

Job Task Area 4.02. Adhere to risk management protocols

Including, but not limited to:

- Utilize components of safety protocols (e.g., client consent, process for gathering consent, right to live at risk, falls prevention, MSDS logs, etc.)
- Identify relevant precautions to provide a safe environment (e.g., isolation, environmental concerns, or contraindications, etc.)

Knowledge Domain 5: Evaluation and Documentation

Job Task Area 5.01. Document client progress

Including, but not limited to:

- Complete progress notes (e.g., electronic, narrative, SOAP, DARP, etc.)
- Develop discharge/transition plans
- Communicate with interdisciplinary team/service providers on client progress
- Conduct summative evaluation of program effectiveness (e.g., revision of goals and objectives, revision of modalities, interventions, and facilitation techniques, etc.)

Job Task Area 5.02. Document program and client incident

Including, but not limited to:

- Identify policies and procedures for reporting specific incidents
- Document specific details of incidents

Knowledge Domain 6: Administration

Job Task Area 6.01. Maintain department documentation

Including, but not limited to:

- Follow service plan of operation (e.g., program schedules, support services, RT/TR interventions, policy, and procedure development, etc.)
- Adhere to agency policies regarding program and client documentation (e.g., timeliness, incident reports, formative and summative evaluations, quality improvement plans, etc.)
- Adhere to agency fiscal management (e.g., budgeting requirements, external/internal funding sources, etc.)
- Identify state/provincial, regional, Federal regulations pertaining to RT/TR services

Job Task Area 6.02. Assign and monitor personnel

Including, but not limited to:

- Contribute to staff performance appraisals
- Assist with education and supervision of staff, students, and volunteers (e.g., provide training opportunities, etc.)
- Maintain internship program

Appendix C: Summary Of The 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.

Appendix D: New Applicant Appeal Instructions

Upon receipt of notification that the application does not meet eligibility requirements, an applicant has 60 days to submit an appeal application. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 60 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 application.

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.

General Instructions: All NCTRC Appeal Applications should be submitted via email or on your dashboard profile at nctrc.org. Each candidate for an appeal should submit complete and accurate information. All materials submitted for the appeal become the property of NCTRC. All information submitted in an Appeals Application and in supporting appeal materials must be true and correct. Additional documentation related to an adverse decision will be required to complete the appeal process; refer to the comments embedded within your application for the specific documentation that is requested.

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.

To Verify Academic Coursework Content or Degree(s) Earned: If credit was not awarded by NCTRC for coursework or degree 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 content of academic courses in therapeutic 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 Work Experience: The candidate must provide verification of paid work experience. Official documentation must be submitted from the personnel department of the employing agency that verifies the paid 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 or in an email directly from the verifying individual.

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 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) hold appeal open for a specified time period to allow for submission of additional information; or (iii) 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 NCTRC staff 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;
- Affirmed, but the Standards Review Committee modifies the basis for the decision;
- Not correct and that the applicant is eligible to sit for the examination.

Within six weeks of appeal application submission, the applicant will receive email notification regarding the Standards Review Committee's final decision. The findings of the Committee affirming or modifying the applicant's educational or experiential compliance will be noted within the Professional Eligibility application on the applicants dashboard profile-page. If the Committee and Executive Director affirm the denial decision, the applicant will be required to apply as a new applicant meeting all current NCTRC Certification Standards upon the date of subsequent application submission.

Appendix E: Recertification Audit Information

Upon submission of the recertification application, a percentage of applications will be randomly selected for audit. The purpose of the audit is to verify the completion of all continuing education hours listed on the recertification application. Certificants who are selected for audit will be directly notified by NCTRC via email. Certificants will have 15 days to submit or upload their continuing education materials and professional experience verification for the audit process. Failure to submit the continuing education materials in a timely manner will result in a denial of recertification. If you are not selected for audit, you will not need to submit your continuing education documents. NCTRC randomly audits a percentage of recertification applications. Therefore, certificants should not rely on the recertification status or application of other certificants (or prior recertification applications) in selecting courses and CEUs for recertification. For audited recertification applications only, courses and CEU offering will be reviewed by NCTRC on a case-by-case basis. Once the recertification application is selected for audit, a withdrawal of the audited application will result in a non-refund of fees.

Appendix F: Recertification Appeal Instructions

Upon receipt of notification that the application does not meet recertification requirements, a certificant has 60 days to submit an appeal application. If a certificant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 60 days, the certificant forfeits any right to an appeal at a later date of the decision to deny recertification. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal at this stage.

GROUNDINGS FOR AN APPEAL.

The grounds for an appeal are limited to:

- Demonstrate that the Certification Standards were not properly applied; and/or
- Provide information that was not presented previously and which sustains the minimum credits required for recertification.

- **General Instructions:** All NCTRC Recertification Appeal applications should be submitted by email or your profile at nctrc.org. Appellants should submit complete and accurate information. All materials submitted to the Standards Review Committee for review become the property of NCTRC. All information submitted in an Appeals Application and in supporting appeal materials must be true and correct.

To Verify Professional Experience for Recertification: If an appellants professional experience was not accepted in the review of a recertification application, this may be appealed by providing official documentation related to acceptable therapeutic recreation experience. Official documentation of duties, dates or hours must be provided through submission of the Employment Verification Form.

To Verify Academic Courses: If an academic course was not accepted towards recertification requirements, the appellant must submit an official academic transcript to verify academic credits granted. Official course outlines must be submitted if the appellant wishes the course content to be evaluated based on the NCTRC Job Analysis Study.

To Verify Continuing Education Units/Credits: The appellant must submit official documentation to verify that acceptable credit has been granted and/or that content is related to the NCTRC Job Analysis Study. To verify that the type of credit is acceptable, the appellant must submit an original certificate or documentation from the continuing education sponsor which demonstrates that credit granted follows the guidelines of ANSI/IACET Standard for Continuing Education and Training. To verify content, the program brochure or official description of the session or program must be submitted.

Appeal Review Notice: 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 a applicant's credentials, the Standards Review Committee may correct the error, even when the error is not in favor of the appellant.

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 recertification requirements have been met. The Executive Director shall either: (i) reverse the prior adverse decision and grant recertification (notifying the appellant 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 recertification eligibility and grant recertification, the Executive Director shall forward the appellant 's entire recertification application and appeal documentation 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 recertification is subject to review. At any time during its review of the appeal, the Standards Review Committee may request additional information. Following its review, the Standards Review Committee shall make any of the following determinations:

1. That the adverse decision was correct and is affirmed;
2. That the adverse decision of the staff is affirmed, but the basis for the adverse decision is modified by the Standards Review Committee;
3. That the adverse decision was not correct and that the appellant is recertified.

The applicant will receive email notification of the Standards Review Committee's final decision regarding the appeal. The findings of the committee will be noted within the Recertification Application on the dashboard profile page.

FINAL APPEAL TO THE NCTRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A final appeal to the NCTRC Board of Directors is only available for decisions which are alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary or capricious manner. No other ground for appeal is available. All decisions, which are not alleged to be arbitrary or capricious and which are not appealed to the Board of Directors are final.

The applicant may appeal any decision which is alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary or capricious manner to the NCTRC Board of Directors by submitting a written appeals statement within 30 days of receipt of the decision. 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 or capricious decision-making.

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 verifiable method of delivery.

Appendix G: NCTRC Fees And Payment 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 July 1, 2025.
2. The required fees must be submitted or the NCTRC application will not be reviewed.
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 the credit card information you have submitted is rejected, you will be assessed \$20.00 for the rejected credit card.
6. If a personal check is returned by a bank for any reason, the individual will be assessed \$25.00 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 countries.
8. 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

Professional Eligibility Review Fee	\$125
Returned Application Processing Fee	\$25
Pre Application Coursework Review Fee (Optional)	\$50
Continuing Education Pre Approval Process Review Fee (Optional)	\$35
Exam Registration Fee	\$350
Exam Reschedule Fee	\$25
CTRS Annual Renewal Fee	\$85
CTRS Recertification Fee (Option 1 only)	\$30
CTRS Recertification Late Submission Fee	\$50
Fee for Bank Checks from Foreign Countries	\$25
Fee for Returned Check	\$25
Fee for Rejected Credit Card	\$20
Fee for Disputed Charge	\$25

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