

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 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 July 1, 2021.**

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 National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification, Inc., (“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.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
Application Deadlines	5
PREREQUISITES AND DISCIPLINARY PROCESS	5
Grounds for Issuing Sanctions	6
NCTRC PROCESS FOR ADMINISTERING COMPLAINTS.....	7
Investigation, Notice, Review and Decision by the Standards Review Committee	7
Hearing and Decision by the Standards Hearing Committee.....	8
ELIGIBILITY	9
Paths to Professional Certification as a CTRS.....	10
Standards Changes.....	11
INTERPRETATIVE GUIDELINES.....	11
Professional Eligibility Review Procedures	11
Appeals of Eligibility Denials	11

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION CONTENT COURSE INFORMATION..... 12
 Courses Requiring Course Outline for Review 12

SUPPORTIVE COURSEWORK INFORMATION 12

INTERNSHIP STANDARDS INFORMATION 13

EXAMINATION INFORMATION..... 14
 Exam Dates 14
 Testing Accommodations..... 14
 Scheduling Your Examination Appointment..... 15
 Reporting Test Results..... 17
 How is Your Score Determined? 17

NCTRC JOB ANALYSIS JOB TASKS AND KNOWLEDGE AREAS FOR THE CERTIFIED THERAPEUTIC RECREATION SPECIALIST 18

NCTRC EXAM REFERENCE LIST 19
 Final Appeal to the NCTRC Board of Directors..... 19

RENEWAL, RECERTIFICATION AND REENTRY..... 19
 Annual Renewal Requirements 19
 CTRS Recertification Requirements 20
 Designated Specialization Areas 21
 Professional Experience Component 22
 Continuing Education Component 22
 Reexamination Component..... 25
 Recertification Interpretive Guidelines..... 25

REENTRY REQUIREMENTS 27

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS DURING THE REENTRY PERIOD 28

NCTRC FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES 28

APPENDIX A: STANDARDS CHANGES 29

APPENDIX B: JOB ANALYSIS REPORT - JOB TASK DOMAINS 30
 Professional Knowledge Domains 31
 Definition of Terms..... 32

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF THE STANDARDS OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES FOR THE CTRS:32

APPENDIX D: NEW APPLICANT APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS.....33
 Appeal Instructions..... 33

APPENDIX E: RECERTIFICATION AUDIT INFORMATION34

APPENDIX F: RECERTIFICATION APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS35
 Final Appeal to the NCTRC Board of Directors..... 36

APPENDIX G: NCTRC FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES.....36
 NCTRC CERTIFICATION FEE SCHEDULE: All certification review fees paid to NCTRC are non-refundable
 37

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 therapeutic recreation.

Please read this booklet of NCTRC Certification Standards thoroughly. If you have any questions about the NCTRC certification process or the information contained in the NCTRC Certification Standards, please contact NCTRC at (845) 639-1439, nctrc.org, or send an email to nctrc@nctrc.org.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications for Professional Eligibility are accepted throughout the year. The NCTRC Exam is offered six times throughout the year utilizing a month long testing window for each exam administration. Please check online at nctrc.org, for the most current information regarding Exam Application Deadlines and Fees.

Applicants must gain NCTRC eligibility to be seated for the NCTRC exam. Eligibility is valid for five years from the date of issue. Professionally eligible applicants must pass the exam to earn the CTRS credential.

Please submit a completed application (appropriate to your eligibility path) within the designated application window in order to be reviewed for a requested exam. The review process for completed applications is typically 4-6 weeks. If your application is incomplete it will be denied and your requested test date may be postponed. All materials submitted to NCTRC as part of the Professional Eligibility Application process will become the property of NCTRC.

Please keep contact information current throughout your application process. You may update your contact information on your profile at nctrc.org, or you may email your requested changes 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, logo, emblem, and the name "National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification," the designation "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist," and abbreviations relating thereto are all the exclusive property of NCTRC and may not be used in any way without the express prior written consent of NCTRC. In the event of suspension, limitation, revocation, or resignation from NCTRC, or as otherwise requested by NCTRC, each individual shall immediately relinquish, refrain from using, and correct at his or her expense any outdated or other inaccurate use of NCTRC's certificate, logo, emblem, the name "NCTRC," the designation "Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist," "CTRS," and related abbreviations.

- **To Authorize the Release of Information by NCTRC.** The candidate or certificant agrees that NCTRC and its officers, directors, committee members, employees, agents, and others may communicate any and all information relating to the candidate's application, certification, and review thereof including, but not limited to, pendency or findings of violations of NCTRC's Certification Standards, to state and federal authorities, licensing boards, employers, other certificants, and others.
- **To Waive Claims Against NCTRC.** Each candidate and certificant agrees that he or she waives, releases, discharges, and exonerates NCTRC, its officers, directors, employees, committee members, panel members and agents, and any other persons authorized by NCTRC for any action taken pursuant to the NCTRC Certification Standards and policies and procedures from any and all claims or liability, including, but not limited to, claims or liability arising out of: (i) the furnishing or inspection of documents, records and other information; and (ii) any investigation, review, or decision regarding an application or certification made by NCTRC.

GROUNDS FOR ISSUING SANCTIONS

NCTRC may deny certification or recertification, revoke certification or recertification, or issue 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, (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, the Standards Hearing 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 certified mail, return receipt requested, 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, 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 certified mail-return receipt requested, 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 Standards Review Committee's decision to request a hearing on the matter. The candidate or certificant requesting a hearing must send their written request to NCTRC within 15 days after the date of receipt of the Standards Review Committee's decision;
- b. That the candidate or certificant may appear at the hearing in person, by distance technology, by telephone conference or by written correspondence, with or without the assistance of legal counsel, may examine and cross-examine any witness under oath, and produce evidence on his or her behalf;
- c. That if the candidate or certificant does not request a hearing within 15 days, the decision of the Standards Review Committee is final; and
- d. That the candidate or certificant is responsible for bearing his or her own expenses for the hearing, including, but not limited to, transportation costs, the expenses of legal counsel and the expenses of any witnesses the candidate or certificant wishes to call.

HEARING AND DECISION BY THE STANDARDS HEARING COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR A HEARING

A candidate or certificant may request to attend the hearing of the Standards Hearing Committee: (i) in-person at the Standards Hearing Committee's annual meeting; (ii) by telephone conference call scheduled by the Standards Hearing Committee; (iii) by distance technology, or (iv) by submission of written documents and other evidence for consideration by the Committee. The candidate or certificant requesting a hearing must send their written request to NCTRC within 15 days after the date of receipt of the Standards Review Committee's decision. The Standards Hearing Committee shall schedule a hearing after the request is received, allowing for a reasonably adequate period of time for preparation for the hearing, and shall send by certified mail, return receipt requested, email with delivery confirmation and read receipt requested, or other verifiable method of delivery, a Notice of Hearing to the candidate or certificant. The Notice of Hearing shall include a statement of the time and place of the hearing as selected by the Standards Hearing Committee. For good cause, the individual may request modification of any dates established for a hearing or for submission of written documentation. If the Standards Hearing Committee was previously exposed to the matter during a recertification appeal, the Chair may appoint three Past-Chairs to conduct the hearing.

Upon receipt of a hearing request, the Standards Review Committee shall forward the allegations, response, their findings, and conclusions to the Standards Hearing Committee. The Standards Review Committee shall designate one of its members, the Executive Director, or NCTRC legal counsel, to represent NCTRC at the hearing. The NCTRC representative shall present the allegations and any substantiating evidence, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and otherwise present the matter during the hearing of the Standards Hearing Committee.

HEARING

1. The Standards Hearing Committee shall maintain a verbatim oral or written transcript of in-person hearings. Telephone and written hearings do not require transcription or recording.
2. NCTRC and the candidate or certificant may consult with and be represented by legal counsel, make opening statements, present documents and testimony, examine and cross-examine witnesses under oath, make closing statements, and present written briefs as scheduled by the Standards Hearing Committee.
3. The Standards Hearing Committee shall determine all matters relating to the hearing. The hearing and related matters shall be determined on the record by majority vote.

4. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Relevant evidence may be admitted. Disputed questions shall be determined by majority vote of the Standards Hearing Committee.
5. Proof shall be by preponderance of the evidence.
6. Whenever a mental or physical disability is alleged, the candidate or certificant may be required to undergo a physical or mental examination at the expense of the candidate or certificant. The report of such an examination shall become part of the evidence considered.
7. The Standards Hearing Committee shall issue a written decision following the hearing and any briefing. The decision shall contain factual findings, conclusions and any sanctions applied. It shall be mailed promptly by certified mail, return receipt requested, email with delivery confirmation and read receipt requested, or other verifiable method of delivery to the candidate or certificant.

FINAL APPEAL PROCEDURES

If the decision of the Standards Hearing 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 Hearing 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 Hearing 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 Hearing 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 Hearing 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 entire written record without oral hearing, although written briefing may be submitted. The decision of the NCTRC Board of Directors shall be rendered in writing following any briefing. 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 certified mail, return receipt request, 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

OVERVIEW

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

PATHS TO PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AS A CTRS

There are two paths to professional certification as a CTRS: the academic path and the equivalency path. Both paths are defined below. Interpretive guidelines immediately follow the description of certification requirements for each path.

NCTRC offers a voluntary pre-approval process for coursework prior to the submission of a formal application. NCTRC's Pre-Application Coursework Review Process allows potential applicants to determine whether they meet current certification coursework requirements before submitting a formal application. This process will allow for early confirmation of coursework to individuals who are not certain if previously completed coursework will count towards NCTRC eligibility requirements.

PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY - ACADEMIC PATH

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

1. Enrollment in a baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university with a major in (a) therapeutic recreation (recreation therapy); (b) recreation or leisure with an option in therapeutic recreation; (c) therapeutic recreation, recreation, or leisure in combination with other fields of study (e.g., Therapeutic Recreation and Health Studies; Recreation and Sport Management; Leisure and Tourism); and (d) a major in another field of study with a concentration/emphasis/sub-plan/option/minor/certificate in recreation therapy/therapeutic recreation.
2. Completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours toward degree attainment.
3. Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses: A total of 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester or 20 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation content is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required therapeutic recreation courses may be taught by the applicant as an educator in a college/university academic program. (Note: A change in this standard will go into effect 1/1/22. See Standards Changes in the Appendix A for details.) Educators may not enroll in their own courses to meet certification requirements.
4. 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; 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.
5. Submission of an official academic transcript denoting the completion of the above requirements.

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

1. Successful completion of the NCTRC exam.
2. Completion of a internship experience in accordance with NCTRC Standards.
 - A minimum 560-hour, 14 week internship experience in therapeutic recreation services that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study under the supervision of both academic and agency internship supervisors who are NCTRC CTRS certified. The agency supervisor must also possess the CTRS credential for one year prior to supervising an internship student. An acceptable internship experience is one which is completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed as verified on the official transcript.
3. Academic degree attainment as documented by an official academic transcript.

PROFESSIONAL ELIGIBILITY – EQUIVALENCY PATH

Equivalency refers to an alternate route to certification based upon specific academic preparation and paid work experience.

The Equivalency Path eligibility requirements to take the CTRS examination are the following:

1. Completion of a baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university verified by an official transcript.
2. Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses: A total of 18 semester or 24 quarter hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester or 20 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation content is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required therapeutic recreation courses may be taught by the applicant as an educator in a college/university academic program. (Note: A change in this standard will go into effect 1/1/22. See Standards Changes in Appendix A for details.) An Educator may not enroll in their own course to meet certification requirements.

3. 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; 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.
4. Professional Experience
 - a. A minimum of 5000 hours of paid work experience that uses the TR process, or
 - b. A minimum of 1500 hours of paid work experience that uses the TR process, under the supervision of a CTRS for at least 1 hour for every 10 hours worked each week. While onsite or direct supervision is strongly encouraged, NCTRC recognizes there may be applicants who are unable to receive onsite supervision with a CTRS. With current technology, there may be alternative effective models of supervision.

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.

Interpretative Guidelines

- **Official Transcript:** An official transcript is a legal document issued by a university or college registrar that contains documentation of completed coursework and degree confirmation. The official transcript needs to contain the date of issue and the signature or seal of the registrar. NCTRC accepts both printed and electronic copies of an original academic transcript. However, electronic transcripts need to be sent directly to NCTRC from the registrar's office. 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.
- **Content Course Prefix:** Content courses in therapeutic recreation and general recreation must appear on the official transcript under a consistent prefix (e.g., REC, LEIS, etc.) representative of the college/university department, program, or unit offering the academic major in therapeutic recreation or recreation/leisure. Content courses listed under the prefix of departments, programs, or units of study not offering the major in therapeutic recreation or recreation/leisure will not be accepted.
- **Required Coursework Interpretive Guideline:** All required coursework submitted for eligibility must be college-level credit bearing coursework. Each course applied toward meeting the eligibility requirements must be a graded experience and reflected on the transcript. Audited courses will not be accepted as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility.

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 45 days to submit an appeal application to NCTRC. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application within 45 days, the applicant forfeits any right to an appeal at a later date of the decision denying eligibility and will have to reapply as a new applicant meeting all of the current NCTRC Certification Standards. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal at this stage. Please see New Applicant Appeals Instructions in Appendix D.

Therapeutic Recreation Content Course Information

- NCTRC requires the completion of “content coursework” for certification. A content course is generally interpreted as having a theoretical and/or philosophical focus of study. Skill, activity, practicum, or internship courses are not accepted as content courses.
- The current NCTRC Job Analysis defines the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice in therapeutic recreation. The professional certification exam is based on the knowledge areas defined by the NCTRC Job Analysis. It is assumed that academic programs in therapeutic recreation prepare individuals for competent practice in the field. The coursework the student completes in a therapeutic recreation degree program should cover the necessary entry-level knowledge and skills for competent practice.
- A profession is expected to possess a commonly held body of knowledge. This body of knowledge becomes the basis for identifying those individuals who are qualified for professional recognition through credentialing. Thus, the primary focus of the term content course for NCTRC will be the commonly identified and supported areas of professional knowledge as defined through the current NCTRC Job Analysis. A therapeutic recreation content course 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, 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.

TITLES OF COURSES WHERE OFFICIAL OUTLINES ARE REQUIRED FOR REVIEW:

- Independent Readings
- Independent Study
- Readings Courses
- Seminar Courses
- Special Projects
- Special Topics
- Thesis or Dissertation
 - Thesis or Dissertation coursework must meet the same requirements of content courses as described above. A total of one course and three 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 fields of therapeutic recreation as contributing to the knowledge base for practice in therapeutic recreation. NCTRC certification requires specific supportive coursework for both paths to 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 3 semester or 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 (at least 50% of the course respectively). A course that is intended to serve as an entry-level Human Biology course does not meet the NCTRC Anatomy and Physiology requirement.

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY REQUIREMENT:

The content area of abnormal psychology is required for professional certification because knowledge of behavior disorders, theories of causation, descriptions of the disorders, and strategies of various therapies is deemed essential to an educational foundation in therapeutic recreation. Typical course titles in abnormal psychology 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.

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, or human growth and development across the lifespan.

Internship Standards Information

Progressive learning experiences using the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis is an integral component of professional preparation in therapeutic recreation.

- **Active certification status of CTRS Supervisor:** The primary site supervisor must possess active certification status at the CTRS level on the first day of the applicant's internship and have been certified for at least one year prior to supervising interns. Any change in certification status of the supervisor during the internship shall not affect the certification eligibility of an applicant.
- **The Academic Internship Supervisor** must be an active CTRS at the start of the internship experience 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.
- **Internship Should Be Completed After Coursework:** An acceptable internship must be completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed. Verification of the completed internship must appear on the official academic transcript. The majority of therapeutic recreation and recreation content coursework is defined as no less than 12 semester or 16 quarter hours of coursework with at least 9 semester and 12 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content coursework. This requirement applies to coursework completed at the degree earning institution and does not apply to coursework completed after the academic degree is conferred.
- **Academic credit and an evaluative grade:** The student 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.

Examination Information

The NCTRC testing program commenced in 1990 with the adoption of a 200-item written exam. The NCTRC Exam is based on the NCTRC Job Analysis of the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, which assures the test specifications and the exam are related to the practice of therapeutic recreation. Since 1990, the NCTRC exam has evolved through several phases to its current computer-based format. NCTRC subcontracts to both Alpine Testing Solutions (Alpine) and PSI for testing development and administration. 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. PSI is a testing industry leader with offices worldwide. They currently administer exams for over 350 certification programs and deliver over 15 million exams annually through remote proctoring and their network of more than 1,250 test centers worldwide.

EXAM DATES

The NCTRC National Certification Exam is administered at PSI Testing Centers across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The NCTRC Exam is offered six times throughout the year utilizing a month long testing window for each exam administration. The NCTRC Exam can be completed at PSI Testing Centers or via Live Remote Proctoring.

PSI TESTING CENTERS

PSI offers full-service test administration, with an extensive test center network and remote proctoring methods that provide our candidates with maximum flexibility. The test sites are required to comply with regulations governing the access for individuals with disabilities.

LIVE REMOTE PROCTORING

Live remote proctoring is where a candidate may schedule the test for a set date and time, then launches the test via computer from a secure location that will be required to meet specific criteria. Live remote proctored tests are taken outside established testing centers. In this scenario, a proctor greets the test-taker and monitors them in real-time while they complete the test. Embedded technologies, such as facial recognition biometrics and audio level monitoring, assist online proctors in identifying potential misconduct. An easy-to-use user interface and live chat help assure a seamless and supported experience.

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 to the start of the exam window. 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 800-367-1565 ext. 6750 to schedule an appointment for exam administration. Local centers may not schedule appointments for candidates approved to receive testing accommodations.

ABOUT TAKING THE EXAM

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

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

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

Candidates are Limited to One Exam per Test Administration Window: If a candidate is unsuccessful in achieving the required passing score, they may register for an exam in the next test administration window 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 CTRS Examination contains 150 multiple choice items for which you will receive 270 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the exam, you will receive a score report indicating pass or fail.

Taking the exam with Double Time:

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

SCHEDULING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

TO SCHEDULE YOUR NCTRC EXAM

- After submitting the exam registration fee, click "Schedule My Exam" on the MY NCTRC LOGIN dashboard to schedule an appointment at a PSI test center or via Live Remote Proctoring.
- To Reschedule or Cancel an Exam Appointment with PSI within the same window please login to MY NCTRC LOGIN and click Schedule My Exam to be taken to the PSI dashboard.

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 live remote proctored exam
 - Failure to complete the exam using Live Remote Proctoring due to candidate technology issues
- Failure to make an appointment or cancel an appointment for an exam once you are issued exam authorization will result in a \$25 rescheduling fee.
- 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 5 days prior to the scheduled appointment date which then will result in the forfeiture of the entire exam fee.
- All exam withdrawal refunds will be issued following the completion of the testing window.

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 live remote proctoring, 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. You will need to bring documentation of this change (e.g., a marriage license) with you for identification purposes to the test center.

Acceptable forms of identification (**which must include your signature and photograph**) are current (valid) driver's license, state or government-issued identification card, or a current (valid) passport. Your ID photo must be current and look like you.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONDUCT AGREEMENT

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

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

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 PSI 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 PSI describing his or her observations.
- In either event, when a test administrator reports to PSI 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, hearing, and determination of validity of the examination, pursuant to the filing of appropriate requests to NCTRC's Standards Review Committee and Standards Hearing Committee.

- **Copyright.** All proprietary rights in the examinations, including copyright and trade secret, are held by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. In order to protect the integrity of the examinations and to assure the validity of the scores that are reported, candidates must adhere to strict guidelines regarding proper conduct in handling these copyrighted, proprietary examinations. Any attempt to reproduce all or part of an examination is strictly prohibited by law. Such an attempt includes but is not limited to: removing materials from the examination room; aiding others by any means in reconstructing any portion of an examination; or selling, distributing, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of an exam. Alleged copyright violations will be investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. It should also be noted that examination scores might be invalidated in the event of this type of suspected breach.

REPORTING TEST RESULTS

Candidates will receive an unofficial pass or fail score notification at the test center. The score notification will be available on the computer screen and not in written format. Official written score reports will be e-mailed from PSI. Passing candidates receive a score report with PASS indicated. The exam is designed as a knowledge competency test and is not intended to distinguish among scores above the passing point. Therefore, no scores are reported for passing candidates. This policy is established as a safeguard against misuse of the exam scores of passing candidates. If a candidate does not pass the examination, the score report will indicate that the candidate was unsuccessful in achieving the required passing scaled score. The score report of those who do not pass will indicate a scaled score between 20 and 54 along with diagnostic information for the six content areas included in the exam. Diagnostic information is provided to failing candidates at the domain level to help identify areas to study in preparing to retest. Candidates should be cautioned that there are limitations in the information provided as not all domains have the same number of questions or have small numbers of questions per domain which may impact the reliability of the domain scores. Domains with fewer questions should be reviewed cautiously.

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 YOUR SCORE DETERMINED?

The passing score was established via a systematic procedure (Standard Setting Study) that employed the judgment of a representative group of Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists from across the country. 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.

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

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

EXAM SCORE INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPLAINTS

Candidates with complaints or comments about testing center facilities and/or supervision, examination content, or any other matter related to the testing program should contact PSI candidate services team to report any/all issues to the representative. The representative will contact the appropriate team to investigate the complaint. Complaints can take 7-10 business days to complete, depending on the 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 enabled the profession to safeguard consumers by stating who is competent to practice. The establishment of a valid job analysis is essential to the integrity of a credentialing program and an exam program.

NCTRC has completed a comprehensive Job Analysis in 1987, 1997, 2007, and in 2014, NCTRC completed its fourth comprehensive Job Analysis Study. The list of tasks below are the current tasks performed by the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. These job tasks represent the therapeutic recreation process. The knowledge base for therapeutic recreation practice forms the basis of the NCTRC exam content and is used to evaluate continuing education for therapeutic recreation. Please see Appendix B for the 2014 Job Analysis Report.

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 available as reference material in the development of the exam items for the national exam for CTRS. 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.

FINAL APPEAL TO THE NCTRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

The applicant may appeal any decision of the Standards Review Committee which is alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary and capricious manner to the NCTRC Board of Directors by submitting a written appeals statement within 30 days of receipt of the decision of the Standards Review Committee. NCTRC may file a written response to the appeal to the Board of Directors.

The NCTRC Board of Directors, by majority vote, shall render a decision on the record, without oral hearing, although additional written documentation may be submitted to support or refute the allegation of arbitrary and capricious decision-making by the Standards Review Committee.

The decision of the NCTRC Board of Directors shall be rendered in writing. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be transmitted to the individual by verifiable method of delivery.

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 their respective 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 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 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.

In order to meet the requirements for recertification, a CTRS must choose **one of the following two options:**

Option	Description	Recertification with Designated Specialization Area
1. Professional Experience and Continuing Education in Therapeutic Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 480 hours of professional experience• Minimum of 50 hours of continuing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 5,000 hours of professional experience in the designated specialization area• Minimum of 75 hours of continuing education in the designated specialization area
2. Reexamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passing score on the NCTRC Certification Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 5,000 hours of professional experience in the designated specialization area• Minimum of 75 hours of continuing education in the designated specialization area

DESIGNATED SPECIALIZATION AREAS

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 to those certificants submitting their recertification application as an added option.

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, 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, 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, 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, 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, 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, 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, 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 Job Task Areas. NCTRC may require verification of professional experience through the personnel department or immediate supervisor at the employing agency.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMPONENT

The CTRS is required to complete professional level (baccalaureate level or higher) educational opportunities to maintain and enhance knowledge and skill to practice. These include completing educational contact hours, specifically at professional conferences, workshops, symposia and seminars. The CTRS may earn continuing education credits for internship supervision, authoring professional publications, giving professional presentations, and completing academic courses. The CTRS may also earn continuing education credits 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 Knowledge Areas. Credits are measured according to the equivalency of an educational contact hour (60 minutes of actual classroom/instructional time, excluding registration time and breaks). NCTRC will also recognize continuing education units (CEU's) and translate these into credits as follows:

1 CONTACT HOUR =	0.1 CEU =	1 CREDIT
10 CONTACT HOURS =	1.0 CEU =	10 CREDITS

NCTRC offers an approval process for both pending and/or completed continuing education hours prior to the submission of a formal recertification application. This process allows for early confirmation of continuing education approval to individuals who are not certain if specific continuing education opportunities will count towards NCTRC Recertification requirements.

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 of the course or program, as listed on the official document, is critical to whether it can be used toward NCTRC Recertification. The title must be related to one of the NCTRC Job Analysis Knowledge Areas. In order to match the title with the items, the title must be clear and reflective of the program. 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 TRIMESTER CREDIT	= 14 CE HOURS	= 14 CREDITS	1 TRIMESTER CREDIT	= 7 CE HOURS	= 7 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.

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, INTERNSHIP SUPERVISION, AND SUPERVISION OF EQUIVALENCY PATH 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. When a certificant presents, continuing education credit will not be given for attending that session. 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 Equivalency Path Applicant (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, regional or national 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 credits will be awarded for publications, presentations, internship supervision, and supervision of equivalency path applicants. The content of publications and presentations must be directly related to the NCTRC Job Analysis Knowledge Areas.

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 credits will not be awarded without official documentation, as described below.

DOCUMENTATION NEEDED FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS FOR RECERTIFICATION

Category	Description	Acceptable Proof for Hours
Therapeutic Recreation Continuing Education Programs from Conferences & Workshops	Programs, courses, symposia with therapeutic recreation content directly related to Job Analysis Knowledge Areas. Examples of continuing education sources include: hospital/agency education, teleconferences/ audio seminars, home study and on-line programs.	Official documentation of continuing education credit 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 knowledge areas from the Job Analysis, a content outline should be submitted.
Academic Credit Courses	Academic courses offered by an accredited educational institution. On-line and correspondence courses are also acceptable. Content must relate to Job Analysis Knowledge Areas.	Official transcript. If the course title does not appear to be related to the Job Analysis knowledge areas, course outline should be submitted.
Publications*	The content must relate to Job Analysis Knowledge Areas. 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 Knowledge Areas.	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 Knowledge Areas.	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 Equivalency Path Applicants*	Credit awarded for professional experience supervision of equivalency path applicants.	Copy of NCTRC Equivalency Path Professional Experience Supervision Continuing Education Form (Maximum of 6 credits/cycle).
Professional Work Experience	Professional experience based upon the Job Analysis Task Areas.	Letter of verification from the Human Resource department or immediate supervisor for the minimum requirement of professional experience that aligns with the NCTRC Job Analysis task areas.

*No more than a total of 25 continuing education hours in Publications, Presentations, Internship Supervision, and supervision of Equivalency Path applicants 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 used on the test as is used 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 who choose to take the NCTRC exam for recertification may only take the last scheduled exam prior to their recertification expiration date. 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 therapeutic recreation knowledge areas delineated in the current NCTRC Job Analysis.
- **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 therapeutic recreation knowledge areas delineated in the current NCTRC Job Analysis.
- **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 National Job Analysis Knowledge Areas. The lecture must be a minimum of 60 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 Task Areas:** The NCTRC National Job Analysis Task Areas define the skills used by a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist on the job. The tasks represent the TR process. NCTRC uses these Job Task Areas as criteria for determining therapeutic recreation professional experience regardless of whether it is paid or volunteer. Professional experience used for recertification purposes must relate to the Job Analysis Task Areas.
- **Job Analysis Knowledge Areas:** The NCTRC National Job Analysis Knowledge Areas define the knowledge required to perform the Job Analysis Tasks used by a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist on the job. The knowledge areas are the basis for educational and testing requirements at NCTRC. NCTRC uses these Job Knowledge Areas as criteria for determining whether continuing education is related to therapeutic recreation.
- **Length of Continuing Education:** Each continuing education session must be 60 minutes or longer. Sessions of less than 60 minutes will not be accepted by NCTRC, regardless of the content.
- **Professional Level Education:** It is required that CTRSs will complete professional level (baccalaureate level or higher) continuing education. Professional level continuing education is defined as opportunities that are either sponsored by an organization representing professionals that have an entrance requirement of a four year degree or a continuing education experience that is primarily designed for an audience that possesses a bachelors degree or higher.
- **Professional Service Experience:** May occur within a therapeutic recreation program or for a therapeutic recreation professional organization.

- Volunteer service for a professional organization. Professional service experience may include: committee work for a professional therapeutic recreation organization at the local, state, regional or national 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 (usually the executive director, chair of board of directors, conference coordinator, etc.).
- 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 the log signed by the CTRS supervisor or staff member at the agency.
- Published professional book: Publications and/or texts using theoretical/conceptual content that relates to the NCTRC Job Analysis.
- Published editor of a professional book or professional journal: Editing a book or a journal related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis. 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.
- Authored article in refereed journal: Authoring articles related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis 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.
- 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.
- Published article in non-refereed professional state, regional or national magazine: Published articles in a state, regional or national professional publication related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis.
- Published professional newsletter article: A published article that discusses a topic related to TR practice and the NCTRC Job Analysis.
- Presentation at professional conferences: Presentations made at a professional conference, workshop or seminar with content related to TR practice. Presentations earn 2 credits for each 60 minutes of lecture. When there are multiple presenters each presenter may earn 2 credits for each 60 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 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 Equivalency Path Applicants: Supervision of professional experience that aligns with the TR process for Equivalency Path applicants. Supervisors are required to provide 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours worked by the applicant, resulting in a minimum of 100 hours of supervision for each supervisory experience. Each supervision experience is awarded two (2) CE credit hours. A CTRS can submit a maximum of three (3) CE earning Equivalency Path supervisory experiences for a maximum of 6 credit hours per recertification cycle.

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 60 days 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. An adverse decision includes decisions denying eligibility to sit for the examination for recertification purposes and decisions denying recertification for any reason. The recertification decision will be emailed to the certificant after the completion of the review. Results of recertification reviews will not be provided over the telephone. 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 45 days to submit an appeal application. If a certificant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 45 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 Hearing 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 Hearing Committee. Once a decision is rendered, notification will be e-mailed to the applicant from the NCTRC office. If the extension request is granted a recertification application will be due no later than one (1) year after the original recertification due date. 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. Exam registration due dates are listed on the NCTRC website at nctrc.org.

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 CTRS certification examination, 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 for 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.

Emergency Situations During The Reentry Period

The NCTRC Executive Director and the Chair of the NCTRC Standards Hearing Committee (and, in limited cases, the Chair of the Board of Directors) have complete 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 for the next regularly scheduled CTRS examination. The reentry cycle will only be extended until NCTRC releases the results of the next regularly scheduled examination. Under no circumstances will NCTRC extend the reentry cycle more than one examination cycle. 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

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

2021

EQUIVALENCY PATH – SUPPORTIVE COURSEWORK CHANGE

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Effective July 1, 2021, the standard pertaining to the required number of supportive courses will read as follows:

EQUIVALENCY PATH

“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; 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.”

2022

CONTENT COURSE CHANGE – INCREASE IN THERAPEUTIC RECREATION CONTENT COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Effective January 1, 2022, the standard pertaining to the required number of therapeutic recreation content courses will read as follows:

ACADEMIC PATH

“A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter credit hours of RT/TR content coursework. A minimum of six (6) courses in RT/TR is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two (2) of the required RT/TR courses may be taught by the applicant as an educator in a college/university/academic program. Educators may not enroll in their own courses to meet certification requirements.”

EQUIVALENCY PATH

“A minimum of 18 semester or 24 quarter credit hours of RT/TR content coursework. A minimum of six (6) courses in RT/TR is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours. Two(2) of the required RT/TR courses may be taught by the applicant as an educator in a college/university/academic program. Educators may not enroll in their own courses to meet certification requirements.”

Appendix B: Job Analysis Report – JOB TASK DOMAINS

No. Job Task Domains

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with person(s) served, co-workers, allied departments, and external customers
2. Create and maintain a safe and therapeutic environment
3. Maintain CTRS and required state credential(s)
4. Participate in in-service training and staff development
5. Maintain knowledge of current TR/RT trends, techniques, methods, issues, and professional and legal standards
6. Enhance professional competence through additional credentials
7. Enhance professional competence through contribution to the TR/RT field (e.g., professional presentations, research, attending conferences)
8. Support the development of evidence-based practices
9. Adhere to professional standards of practice and code of ethics
10. Participate in quality improvement process (e.g., exit interviews, customer service satisfaction, peer reviews)
11. Participate in agency/professional committees

ASSESSMENT

12. Request and secure referrals/orders from professionals or other sources
13. Obtain and review pertinent information about person(s) served (e.g., records or charts, staff, support system)
14. Select and/or develop assessment methods based on validity, reliability, and needs of the person(s) served and setting (e.g. interview, observation, task performance, established instruments)
15. Establish therapeutic relationship with person(s) served
16. Conduct assessments using selected methods to determine physical, social, affective, cognitive, leisure lifestyle functioning, and environmental factors
17. Analyze and interpret results from assessments
18. Integrate, record, and disseminate results to identified others (e.g., person(s) served, treatment team)

PLAN INTERVENTIONS AND/OR PROGRAMS

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

IMPLEMENT INTERVENTIONS AND/OR PROGRAMS

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

EVALUATE OUTCOMES OF THE INTERVENTIONS/PROGRAMS

31. Evaluate changes in functioning of the person(s) served
32. Determine effectiveness of individual intervention plan and/or program and adjust as needed
33. Revise individualized intervention plan and/or program as necessary with input from the person(s) served and identified others (e.g., parent or legal guardian, support system, treatment team, service providers)

34. Evaluate individual's need for additional, alternative, or discharge of services
35. Determine effectiveness of protocols, modalities, and/or programs for targeted groups

DOCUMENT INTERVENTION SERVICES

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

TREATMENT TEAMS AND/OR SERVICE PROVIDERS

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

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PROGRAMS

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

MANAGE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION/RECREATION THERAPY SERVICES

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

AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

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

*Complete version of the NCTRC Job Task Domains is available online at nctrc.org.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS

No. Professional Knowledge Domains

FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE (FKW)

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

ASSESSMENT PROCESS (ASP)

16. Current TR/RT assessment instruments
17. Interprofessional inventories and questionnaires (e.g., standardized rating systems, developmental screening tests)
18. Secondary sources of assessment data (e.g., records or charts, staff, support system)
19. Criteria for selection and/or development of assessment (e.g., reliability, validity, practicality, availability)
20. Implementation of assessment (e.g., behavioral observations, interviews, performance testing)
21. Sensory assessment (e.g., vision, hearing, tactile)
22. Cognitive assessment (e.g., memory, problem solving, attention span, orientation, safety awareness)
23. Social assessment (e.g., communication/interactive skills, relationships)
24. Physical assessment (e.g., fitness, motor skills function)
25. Affective assessment (e.g., attitude toward self, expression)
26. Leisure assessment (e.g., barriers, interests, values, patterns/skills, knowledge)
27. Functional skills assessment (e.g., access in the community, using social media, using transportation)

DOCUMENTATION (DOC)

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

IMPLEMENTATION (IMP)

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

ADMINISTRATION OF THERAPEUTIC RECREATION/RECREATION THERAPY SERVICE (ADM)

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

ADVANCEMENT OF THE PROFESSION (ADV)

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

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 45 days to submit an appeal application. If an applicant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 45 days, the applicant forfeits any right to an appeal at a later date of the decision denying eligibility and will have to reapply as a new applicant meeting all of the current NCTRC Certification Standards. There is no additional filing fee to request an appeal 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.

APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS

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 to the Standards Review Committee 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. Please see Appendix D for examples of requested documentation.

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

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

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

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

To Verify Work Experience: If credit was not awarded for work experience in therapeutic recreation and this is needed for professional equivalency path application, the candidate must provide verification of paid work experience. In order to do this 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.

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) submit the additional documentation to the Standards Review Committee for consideration of the appeal.

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

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

- Correct and is affirmed;
- 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 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.

Appendix F: Recertification Appeal Instructions

Upon receipt of notification that the application does not meet recertification requirements, a certificant has 45 days to submit an appeal application. If a certificant does not submit an appeal application and all supporting documentation within 45 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.

GROUND 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 Hearing 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 following:

- Official agency job descriptions and/or verification of job description,
- Official documentation from the agency regarding the exact beginning and end dates of the experience, the number of hours completed, and/or the nature of therapeutic recreation responsibilities completed at the agency.

All letters from the agency should be printed on official agency letterhead and signed by the immediate supervisor at the agency. If the supervisor is no longer employed at the agency, a written letter may be obtained from the supervisor at his or her current place of employment along with a letter from the original agency to verify that the supervisor was employed during the time of the appellant's professional experience.

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 Knowledge Areas.

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 Knowledge Areas. 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 Hearing Committee may correct the error, even when the error is not in favor of the appellant.

Appeal to the Standards Hearing 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 Hearing Committee for consideration of the appeal.

Review and Decision of the Standards Hearing 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 Hearing Committee for review.

The Standards Hearing Committee shall review the appeal. The scope of the Standards Hearing 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 Hearing Committee may request additional information. Following its review, the Standards Hearing 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 Hearing Committee;
3. That the adverse decision was not correct and that the appellant is recertified.

Within six weeks of the appeal application decision of the Standards Hearing Committee, the applicant will receive email notification of the Standards Hearing 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 and capricious manner. No other ground for appeal is available. All decisions, which are not alleged to be arbitrary and capricious and which are not appealed to the Board of Directors are final.

The applicant may appeal any decision which is alleged to have been rendered in an arbitrary and capricious manner to the NCTRC Board of Directors by submitting a written appeals statement 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 and 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 2021.
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 \$50.00 for the returned personal check, plus the amount of the check. If a personal check is returned for any reason, the review of the application will be discontinued until such time as all fees have been received by NCTRC. Once an application is delayed because of a returned check, the date of receipt is set by the time all fees are paid and held for the next exam review deadline.
7. All fees must be in U.S. dollars. If an individual resides outside of the U.S., the fees must be sent by credit card, money order or cashier's check in U.S. dollars made payable to NCTRC. There is an additional fee of \$25.00 U.S. dollars for submitting a check or money order drawn on a foreign bank. Postal Money orders will not be accepted from foreign 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	\$35
Continuing Education Approval Process Review Fee	\$35
Exam Registration Fee	\$325
Exam Reschedule Fee	\$25
CTRS Annual Renewal Fee	\$80
CTRS Recertification Fee (Option 1 only)	\$25
CTRS Recertification Late Submission Fee	\$50
CTRS Recertification Document Return Fee	\$15
CTRS Replacement Pin	\$10
Fee for Bank Checks from Foreign Countries	\$25
Fee for Returned Check	\$50
Fee for Rejected Credit Card	\$20

National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®

Protecting and Promoting Since 1981

16 Squadron Blvd, Suite 101
New City, NY 10956
845 639 1439
nctrc.org



NCTRC is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and the CTRS Credentialing Program is accredited by National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

“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 certifiants; NCTRC certification helps to demonstrate the certifiant has met the requirements for the profession.

©2021 National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® All rights reserved. Copying and distribution in any medium is strictly prohibited without prior NCTRC® written consent.