RECREATION THERAPY TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Purpose:

Technical Standards for recreation therapy are the technical cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills deemed essential to complete this program and to perform as a competent generalist in recreational therapy. These technical standards include personal and professional attributes, skills, knowledge, physical, medical, safety, and other requirements that an individual must meet in order to be eligible for retention in the recreation therapy program/courses, and to succeed as a recreation therapist. If a student cannot demonstrate the enumerated skills and abilities, it is the responsibility of the student to request an appropriate accommodation through the UNCW Office of Disability Services (ODS).

Policy:

In order to be a recreation therapy major and progress in the recreation therapy program one must possess a functional level of ability to perform the duties required of a recreation therapist. These core competencies are considered to be the minimum and essential skills necessary to protect the public and to provide a competent practice in recreational therapy. These abilities are encountered in unique combinations in the provision of safe and effective recreation therapy practice. Progression in the program/course may be denied if a student is unable to demonstrate the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

These standards are not a requirement of admission into the program. Individuals interested in majoring in recreation therapy should review these standards to develop a better understanding of the skills, abilities and behavioral characteristics required to successfully complete the program.

UNCW is obliged to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, which may include academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and/or program modifications. Accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature of the academic program, could jeopardize the health and safety of others, or cause an undue burden to the program are not considered reasonable accommodations.

Procedures:

When they enter the program and at the beginning of every
academic year, students must sign a Letter of Agreement (link) confirming that they are able to perform all of the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Progression in the program will be denied if a student is unable to demonstrate the technical standards. If an individual experiences a change during the program/course, so that the technical standards cannot be met with or without reasonable accommodations, he or she must immediately notify his or her advisor and, if appropriate, the Disability Resource Center. The recreation therapy faculty reserves the right at any time to require an assessment by a qualified healthcare provider at the student's expense in order to assist with the evaluation of the student's ability to perform the technical standards. If that assessment deems the student unable to adequately perform the standard(s) in question with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will be dismissed from the recreation therapy program.

UNCW provides the following technical standards with examples of learning activities to inform prospective and enrolled students of the skills required in completing their degree in recreation therapy and in the provision of recreation therapy services. These technical standards reflect the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to successfully complete the requirements of the recreation therapy program.

When a student demonstrates a problem performing a technical standard, the student will meet with the RTH faculty to again discuss and decide on a written plan to remediate the problem. If the second plan does not eliminate the problem, the RTH faculty will meet with the SHAHS Director and UNCW General Counsel to discuss removing the student from the major. The student has the right to submit a written rebuttal to the RTH faculty and the Director of SHAHS at any time during this process.
Technical Standards
Cognitive

1. Recall, collect, analyze, synthesize, and integrate information from a variety of sources.
2. Measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize data.
3. Problem-solve and think critically in order to apply knowledge and skill.
4. Communicate verbally, and through reading and writing, with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
5. Relay information in oral and written form effectively, accurately, reliably, and intelligibly to individuals and groups, using the English language.

Examples of learning activities found in the recreation therapy curriculum and related to industry standards:
- Process information thoroughly and quickly to prioritize and implement recreation therapy.
- Sequence or cluster data to determine patient/client needs.
- Develop and implement a recreation therapy plan of care for patients/clients in acute, long term and community settings.
- Discriminate fine/subtle differences in medical terminology,
- Report verbally and in writing patient/client data to members of the healthcare team.
- Read and comprehend medical orders and patient/client information found in the medical record.
- Perform math computations for analyzing assessment and evaluation data both with and without a calculator.
- Apply critical thinking in the development and implementation of modifications of interventions as needed to meet client outcomes.
- Ability to select modalities suited to a client’s current functional capacities in order to maximize independence, restore functions(s), and/or aid in adjustment to disability.
Physical

Motor:
1. Coordinate fine and gross motor movements.
2. Coordinate hand/eye movements.
3. Maintain balance from any position.
4. Negotiate level surfaces, ramps and stairs.
5. Function with both hands free for performing psychomotor tasks.
6. Maneuver in small areas.
7. Attend to cognitive and psychomotor tasks for up to 3-hours.

Examples of learning activities found in the recreation therapy curriculum and related to industry standards:

- Control a fall by slowly lowering patient/client to the floor.
- Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Lift or move (turn, position) patients/clients or objects, pull or push objects, weighing up to 35 pounds.
- Reach to shoulder or higher level to place or access equipment, bend or squat to access equipment below bed level.
- Carry equipment and supplies to the patient/client.
- Manipulate small equipment and containers used in recreation therapy practice.
- Perform evaluation and treatment techniques; manipulate common tools used for screening tests and therapeutic intervention of the client.
- Ability to physically maneuver in required clinical settings to accomplish assigned tasks.
- Demonstrate strength and endurance to complete assigned periods of clinical practice

Sensory:
1. Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences, including but not limited to information conveyed through online coursework, lecture, small group activities, demonstrations, and application experiences.
2. Collect information through observation, listening, touching, and smelling.
3. Use and interpret information from diagnostic
Examples of learning activities found in the recreation therapy curriculum and related to industry standards:

- Detect changes in skin color or condition
- Detect a fire in the patient/client care environment.
- Observe patients/clients in a room from a distance of 20 feet away.
- Detect audible alarms generated by mechanical systems such as those that monitor bodily functions, fire alarms, call bells.
- Observe and collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in patient/client care.
- Communicate with peers/faculty/patients/clients and members of the healthcare team in person and over the phone in a variety of settings.
- Detect foul odors of bodily fluids or spoiled foods.
- Detect smoke from burning materials.
- Detect changes in skin temperature.

Behavioral

1. Demonstrate emotional stability to function effectively under stress and adapt to changing environments.
2. Demonstrate appropriate, affective behaviors and mental attitudes to ensure the emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral safety of peers/ patients/clients in compliance with the ethical standards of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association.
3. Maintain effective, mature, and sensitive relationships with others.
4. Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers, and patients/clients.
5. Examine and modify one's own behavior when it interferes with others or the learning environment.
6. Possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility and tolerance.

Examples of learning activities found in the recreation therapy curriculum and related to industry standards:
- Exercise judgment, meet acceptable timeframes for patient/client care delivery (acceptable timeframes are reflected by ability to carry out the usual patient/client care assignment for a particular point in the program within the allotted clinical time), work effectively under stress, and adapt to rapidly changing patient/client care environments.
- Accept accountability for actions that resulted in patient/client care errors.
- Deal effectively with interpersonal conflict if it arises; maintain effective and harmonious relationships with members of the healthcare team.
- Demonstrate appropriate, affective behaviors and mental attitudes to ensure the emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral safety of peers/patients/clients in compliance with the ethical standards of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association.
- Sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program in recreational therapy that includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints, and often concurrently.
- Demonstrate the ability to work as a cooperative team member on group projects.

**Disclosure of a Disability**

If a student believes that he or she is a qualified student with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation, he or she will register with the UNCW’ Disability Resource Center DePaolo Hall [http://uncw.edu/disability/](http://uncw.edu/disability/) to determine eligibility. Students who may need an accommodation or who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, should make an appointment with the RTH Coordinator as early as possible, no later than the first week of the semester. A student who registers with ODS will coordinate and cooperate with ODS to document any impairment and to interact with ODS and the university to determine any reasonable accommodation(s).
Once the student has made a request for accommodation, the University will determine whether the student is qualified and able to perform the essential technical standards with reasonable accommodation, including but not limited to a review of whether the requested accommodations are reasonable, would jeopardize clinician/patient safety, or would fundamentally alter the education process of the student or institution, such as coursework, clinical experiences and internships deemed essential to graduation.

**Pregnancy**

To the extent possible, UNCW encourages a student to continue in a program/course during pregnancy. The university requests that a student inform faculty and/or the recreation therapy coordinator of her pregnancy as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, it may become necessary for the student to obtain a signed statement from the primary health care provider verifying that the student may participate in the program/course, including meeting relevant technical standards. Depending on the circumstances, a student who is less than six weeks post partum may also need to have written documentation from her primary health care provider that states the student can meet the technical standards of the recreation therapy program/course in order to return to clinical practice.

**Acute Injury**

A student who suffers an injury, or has a surgical procedure during the recreation therapy program/course, will be required to provide written documentation from their healthcare provider that states the student can meet the technical standards of the recreation therapy program/course in order to return to clinical practice.