

Recreational Therapy Assistant Program

Student Policy Manual



Fall 2026

Description of the profession

Recreational Therapy Assistants assist with patient/client assessment, the development of treatment goals and with the implementation of individual recreational treatment and/or intervention plans, including the use of activity adaptations and assistive devices and technology. Recreational therapy assistants may plan, develop, implement and supervise activities/recreation opportunities for patients/clients to use to maintain health and well-being. Work assignments and the clinical supervision of recreational therapy assistants are provided by a licensed recreational therapist.

Job-related tasks for the RT assistant are included in the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's publication entitled: Standards for the Practice of Recreational Therapy & Self-assessment Guide.

Program description

The Recreational Therapy Assistant program can be completed over the course of five semesters. Coursework includes instruction in anatomy, psychology, medical terminology, a variety of intervention skills, laboratory classes with numerous client populations and an internship experience.

Students will earn an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) and will be eligible for licensure by the North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure. The Recreational Therapy program courses are offered only once per year and students are encouraged to follow the suggested course sequence. See the current College catalog for course requirements. Please refer to the program curriculum plan (Appendix A) for recommended course sequence.

Program goals

1. To provide excellent educational preparation for Recreational Therapy Assistants by meeting the requirements for licensure by the North Carolina Board for Recreational Therapy Licensure
2. To prepare competent entry-level recreational therapy assistants in cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains.
3. To provide Recreational Therapy students with qualified instructors and the resources necessary to achieve mastery in facilitation, processing and verbal and written expression.
4. To prepare graduates of the WPCC Recreational Therapy program to employment opportunities and professional credentialing.
5. To provide the community with caring, professional, multi-skilled health care professionals to assist their clients in meeting individual treatment goals.
6. To provide a program that follows the mission of Western Piedmont Community College to provide accessible high-quality education that improved lives and promotes community growth.

Student learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the program, students should be able to:

1. Utilize systematic procedures for collecting patient/client information
2. Identify activities and activity adaptations that may be included on the individualized treatment plan
3. Plan and implement group and individual recreational therapy
4. Observe response to activity/intervention and clearly report behavioral observations in written form
5. Work effectively and appropriately with others through collaboration and teamwork

Career opportunities

Recreational Therapy assistants can find employment in a variety of settings including long-term care facilities, hospitals, adult day cares, facilities delivering services to individuals with developmental disabilities and community recreation facilities.

RECREATIONAL THERAPY FACULTY

The Recreational Therapy program is committed to providing excellent instruction in all courses. The program has one full-time faculty and utilizes numerous adjunct faculty that are experts in their field.

Full-time faculty schedules are posted on the office doors. Students are encouraged to contact faculty should the need arise and meet with the faculty during scheduled office hours. If necessary, special arrangements may be made to schedule an appointment at a time other than the posted office hours.

Program Coordinator

Katharine Wright

Office: Patton 8

Phone number: 828.448.3536

Email: kwright@wpcc.edu

Part-time faculty do not have offices on campus and can be contacted via the phone number or email available on the course syllabus.

Adjunct faculty

Kim Michaels, LRT, CTRS	TRE 270, TRE 121, TRE 221, MED 120
Kelli Huggins, LRTA	TRE 271
Caleb Shuffler	TRE 220; TRE 172
Amelia Martin Hannah, LRT, CTRS	TRE 210
Krys Drakin, LRT, CTRS	TRE 110

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Organizations

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

www.atra-online.com

11130 Sunrise Valley Drive

Suite 350

Reston, Virginia 20191

Tel. 703.234.4140

Fax. 703.435.4390

National Recreation and Park Association

www.nrpa.org

22377 Belmont Ridge Road

Ashburn, VA 20148

Tel. 800.626.6772

Fax. 703.858.0794

State Organizations

North Carolina Recreational Therapy Association

www.ncrta.org

P.O. Box 1062

Zebulon, NC 27597

North Carolina Park and Recreation Association

Therapeutic Recreation Division

www.ncrpa.net

883 Washington Street

Raleigh, NC 27605

Tel. 919.832.5868

Fax. 919.832.3323

Students are encouraged to join one of the state organizations as student members may join for a reduced fee. All students are encouraged to attend state conferences.

Student policies

This document is for informational purposes. The Recreational Therapy Assistant Program reserves the right to make changes in policies and regulations and to add or delete course offerings as needed to meet the accreditation standards or licensure requirements.

The Recreational Therapy Program has established policies, which apply to all students. Students are expected to adhere to each of the following policies, guidelines, and regulations. Upon reading and understanding these policies, students will sign an agreement statement that states the student has received and understands these policies.

The purpose of the Recreational Therapy Assistant program is to prepare recreational therapy assistants for job opportunities while meeting the academic standards of Western Piedmont Community College, the Southern Accreditation for Colleges and Schools and the North Carolina Board for Recreational Therapy Licensure.

Liability insurance

Students are required to purchase medical liability insurance during each semester in which they are assigned to a clinical site. The fee for insurance will be included in registration for selected classes and will cover the student in clinical labs for one year. (This is not a health insurance policy, but rather a form of malpractice insurance.)

Accident insurance

In accordance with the College policy, students are required to purchase accident insurance each quarter. Students automatically pay for accident insurance at the time of registration as part of the fee. Students should however, ask at the time of registration if the fee did indeed include the accident insurance. (This only covers accidents that are the result of school related activities.) Students should still have major medical insurance coverage through a major insurance plan.

Health Insurance

Students are recommended to have health insurance. Some lab sites or internship locations may deny placement to students that do not have health insurance. Students will be asked to provide information about their health insurance coverage to Castlebranch.

Within the first semester in the Recreational Therapy Assistant program, students will complete all required immunizations, health evaluation and background check.

Criminal background checks and vaccines are required of all students. Results of the background check are tracked by CastleBranch and made available to all clinical facilities. Results are not seen by the Recreational Therapy faculty. Any student that is denied clinical access due to results of a background check will be dismissed from the program

Students are required to submit a completed medical examination form completed by a medical professional within the last 6 months.

Required immunizations

Tuberculin (PPD): 2-step test within the last 12 months

Annual Tb screening after initial 2-step process: If a PPD is positive, a negative chest x-ray will be required.

MMR: 2 doses or titer for Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Varicella: 2 doses or titer for Varicella

TDaP: within the past 10 years

Covid vaccine (booster recommended)

Influenza: Yearly

- a. Students are required to pay for all immunizations
- b. Students are required to provide proof of immunizations/titers to CastleBranch

CastleBranch, Certified Background Compliance Assist

Background check (\$55): A 7-year search based on name, social security number and address to include:

- State and national criminal background check
- National sex offender registry check
- Office of inspector general/healthcare fraud and abuse check

Medical document manager (\$30)

Vaccine tracking: vaccines/titers listed above

Student responsibilities

Students are responsible for reading, understanding and complying with program policies as outlined in the Recreational Therapy Assistant Policy Manual.

Students are responsible for the proper completion of the academic program, familiarity with the general catalog, maintaining appropriate grade average and meeting all requirements to graduate or transfer. Counselors and academic advisors will work with all students, but the final responsibility is that of the student.

Students are responsible for maintaining communication with the College and keeping current contact information on file with the Record's Office at all times a current address, including zip code and phone number.

Students are responsible for reading email and maintaining contact with their instructors on a regular basis throughout the school week.

Students are responsible for tracking all their courses on Moodle and being aware of their progress and grades in each class.

Students, while associated with the College, are expected to participate in campus and community life in a manner that will reflect positively upon themselves and WPCC.

Recreational Therapy Student Code of Conduct and expected behaviors

The student must:

1. Conduct oneself as a responsible professional adult in all areas of the WPCC campus.
2. Comply with the Student Code of Conduct at WPCC and at all clinical affiliates.
3. Comply with all policies found in the Recreational Therapy Assistant Student policy manual.

Professionalism expectations

Professionalism is an expected result of this program. It is demonstrated in the classroom (as in the workplace) by attendance, punctuality, preparation, participation, adherence to instructions, timely completion of work and attitude toward classmates, faculty and the profession.

Classroom behavior will be documented by the instructor in every TRE class. Non-professional behavior will result in the deduction of points. The weight of the professionalism grade will vary in each class.

1. **Professionals are present on scheduled work days.** In the educational environment, regular attendance is expected and is necessary for the learning experience. Instructors understand that occasionally absences are unavoidable, no absences are excused. The student is either present or absent.
2. **Professionals are informed and prepared to share opinions.** Classroom discussion and preparation in classroom activities is an integral part of all courses. Students must prepare for class by reading assignments and completing all homework assignments. Students should be prepared when called upon to demonstrate critical thinking and verbal skills by contributing to class discussions.
3. **Professionals arrive for meetings, appointments and work on time.** A student arriving late to class disrupts all those students who made an effort to be on time. Any student arriving after class begins will be counted tardy. An academic warning will be issued on the student's eighth tardy.
4. **Professionals are recognizable by their grooming and appropriate attire.** Students in the Recreational Therapy program should always present themselves on the WPCC campus in a professional manner. It is expected that students will be neat, clean and well-groomed. Tight pants, mini-skirts, low-cut tops and other non-professional dress are not appropriate for the classroom setting. Body odor and poor oral hygiene are other areas that can make the classroom setting not conducive to learning. If necessary, the faculty will discuss with the student any issue that interferes with classroom harmony.
5. **Professionals come prepared for work after an absence.** It is the student's responsibility to contact a classmate and be prepared to return to class following an absence. This includes being prepared for exams and having assignments ready.

6. **Professionals arrive for work on time and stay for their appointed hours.** Students must attend $\frac{3}{4}$ of scheduled class time to be counted present. Points will be deducted for not being present for the entire class period.
7. **Professionals show respect for others by making sure their electronic devices are turned off.** Cellular phones and other communication devices must be turned off or silenced during class and must be out of sight.
8. **Respect for supervisors and co-workers is a vital personal characteristic of every professional.** Respect is demonstrated in the classroom by how we treat the faculty and our classmates. Showing disrespect for the instructor or fellow classmates will not be tolerated.

Behavior for which a student may be withdrawn from the Recreational Therapy program by the Dean of Student Services include but are not limited to:

1. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, stealing, providing false information to the school or any student related organization.
2. Misuse of information garnered in class or at a clinical site, including malicious gossip and libel.
3. Disclosure of client information or any private information obtained from clinical sites or lab classes (violation of HIPAA)
4. Behavior that interferes with the rights of others to pursue educational opportunities
5. Unacceptable behaviors in classroom or practicum.
6. Posting confidential or derogatory information related to individuals or agencies on any online forum or webpage.
7. Noncompliance with the rules and regulations of WPCC as outlined in the General Catalog and Recreational Therapy Assistant program as outlined in this policy manual.
8. Possession, use or distribution of any unauthorized drug, alcoholic beverage or other controlled substance while on College grounds or in any clinical facility.

Clinical training attire:

1. Dress for clinical sites should be business casual. Skirts should be knee length or longer.
2. Tops should be modestly cut.
3. Closed toe shoes should be worn.
4. Any instructor may require that students wear RT program T shirt as a part of an event or field trip

Attire at the tower/ropes course:

1. Shorts may be worn, but must be of modest length.
2. Tank tops are not allowed; sleeveless shirts can be worn.
3. Shirts that allow the midriff to be seen are not allowed.
4. Closed-toe shoes are required. No one will be allowed to climb in sandals.
5. All jewelry will be removed prior to climbing; it is recommended that you leave your jewelry at home on tower days.
6. On days when students are facilitating at the tower with an outside group, an official WPCC RT program shirt will be worn.

Students should represent themselves as professionals in their conduct and attire at all times. Failure to arrive in appropriate attire will result in deduction of professionalism points for that day.

Recreational Therapy Admission Policy

The Recreational Therapy Assistant program understands and accepts the concept of the open door policy for general admission to Western Piedmont Community College. General Admission policies can be found in the General catalog. General screening will be done by Student Services.

Students must meet all admission requirements of the College. Students may enter the program in either Spring or Fall semester after meeting with the program coordinator. Any necessary developmental courses (based on placement testing), should be addressed in the first 2 semesters in the program.

In order to remain in the program, students must earn a C or better in all major courses. Any student earning a D or below in any class, may be required to repeat the class. Courses within the program may only be repeated once.

Technical Standards for the Recreational Therapy Assistant program

The following technical standards are provided to inform prospective and enrolled students of the skills required in completing their degree in recreational therapy and in the provision of recreational therapy services. These technical standards reflect the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to successfully complete the requirements of the recreational therapy program.

Cognitive

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

Physical

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

Sensory

- Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences, including but not limited to information conveyed through online coursework, lecture, small group activities, demonstrations and application experiences.
- Collect information through observation, listening, touching and smelling.
- Use and interpret information from diagnostic maneuvers

Behavioral

- Demonstrate emotional stability to function effectively under stress and adapt to changing environments.
- 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.

- Maintain effective, mature and sensitive relationships with others.
- Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers, and patients/clients.
- Examine and modify one's own behavior when it interferes with others or the learning environment.
- Possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility and tolerance.

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 WPCC's Accessibility Services to determine eligibility. (Office of Accessibility Services, Room 146, Hildebrand Hall or call 828-448-3154)
- Students who may need an accommodation or who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, should make an appointment with the Program Coordinator as early as possible, no later than the first week of the semester.
- Once the student has made a request for accommodation, the College 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.

GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance requirements are set by instructors and are documented in course syllabi. Students are responsible for adhering to attendance policies.

TARDINESS:

Tardiness will not be tolerated. Students entering the classroom, lab, or clinic late are disruptive not only to the instructor but to other students as well. Tardiness is one-ten minutes late. Three times of being tardy will be counted as one absence. If you must be late for class, it is still important that you attend the class. Please enter the room as quietly as possible.

DETERMINATION OF STUDENT STATUS

- A. Student retention in recreational therapy program
 - 1. Grade point average of 2.0
 - a. Student is expected to obtain a final grade of "C" or better in all required courses. A final grade lower than "C" in any course may require that the student repeat the course.
 - b. Students will be allowed to repeat a course one time.
 - c. Students earning a "C" in more than one major course will be required to meet with Program Coordinator.
 - 2. Satisfactory performance in the clinical and laboratory areas is determined by the recreational therapy faculty.
 - 3. Student attendance in class and/or clinical is determined by the faculty.
 - a. All students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. In keeping with the College policy, a student may be withdrawn from any course after 14 days of no contact with instructor.
 - b. If an absence cannot be avoided, it is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to arrange for any make-up work.
 - c. For absences due to illness, a doctor's statement may be required.
- B. Student separation from program
 - 1. Student initiated: student is requested to:
 - a. Schedule conference with program coordinator
 - b. State reason, in writing, and follow college procedure for withdrawal
 - c. Have conference with Student Services to set new goals
 - d. Failure to comply may result in student not being readmitted
 - 2. Department initiated:
 - a. Situation is reviewed by coordinator, who recommends action to be taken
 - b. Final decision shall be made by the faculty and coordinator
 - c. In conference with the coordinator and faculty member, student is told of decision and reasons
 - d. Appropriate procedures at Student Services are followed

CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

- A. Be of good moral character and demonstrate growth in ethical professional conduct.
- B. Comply with the Student Code of Conduct and campus rules and regulations of WPCC as stated in the College Catalog.
- C. The use, misuse or abuse of any drug will result in immediate dismissal from the RT Program.
- D. Hold in strict confidence the privileged information of patients and families.
- E. A positive and optimistic attitude is a necessity. Poor attitude can result in dismissal.
- F. Student will at no time be involved in gossip, libel, slander or disclosure of information from clinical practice.
- G. If a student is thought to be cheating, he/she will be given a conference. The second time will automatically result in dismissal from the program.
- H. Violation of any of the above may constitute dismissal from the program. The student will receive in writing the decision of the Coordinator. Appropriate procedures at Student Services may be followed.

WPCC RECREATIONAL THERAPY LABORATORY AND INTERNSHIP POLICIES

CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS:

The RT program uses numerous off-campus clinical affiliations. Students will be placed at selected affiliations during their enrollment in the program. Students will be expected to meet the health screening exams required by the clinical affiliations as well as the behavioral and clinical dress requirements/codes.

TRANSPORTATION:

It is the student's responsibility to maintain reliable transportation to and from school and to all off-campus clinical sites. Attendance problems due to transportation difficulties are the responsibility of the student and are not grounds for an excused absence. Lab assignments will not be made based on transportation needs of the student. Students must have reliable transportation for all off-campus assignments.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

The College may be closed or classes canceled/delayed due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The decision to close the College or cancel classes will be made by the President or other administrator designated by the President. Such actions will not always coincide with announced closing of local public schools, other local colleges, or local business entities. When the College is to close or classes are to be canceled, prompt notice will be given to local radio and television stations so that announcements can be made. When the College closes, all classes at all locations are canceled. Late openings will start with classes normally taught at that hour. When inclement weather occurs during lab classes, students are required to notify their assigned supervisor of the situation. When the school has a delayed opening, classes/labs will resume as scheduled and students will report to their lab assignments at that time.

PART-TIME JOBS:

Realizing the financial assistance needed by some students, part-time jobs may be necessary. Students should realize, however, that courses would require outside classroom study time and assignments. It is important for the working student to understand that preparation time must be allowed for course work in order to increase the chances for successful completion of the Program.

During all lab and internship assignments, students WILL NOT be excused prior to the end of the assigned session for part-time work, personal appointments, or other functions. Students must realize that on occasion, lab sessions will run beyond the scheduled time period.

PHONE CALLS:

Students will not make or receive personal phone calls during scheduled lecture time, lab sessions, or internship hours. Students will not use any cell or pager system during class, laboratory, or internship assignments. The ONLY phone calls that may be made or received are those that are true emergencies. A student's "professionalism grade" will be lowered if he/she makes or receives a phone call during class, lab or internship hours.

After student has signed this statement, a copy should be uploaded to Castlebranch and will be kept on file until after graduation, the original will be kept by the student.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE RECREATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT POLICY MANUAL CONCERNING:

- **Admission Procedures and Requirements**
- **General Student Information**
- **Recreational Therapy Laboratory and Internship Policies**
- **Academic and Professional Dishonesty Policy**
- **Technical standards and essential functions of a Recreational Therapy Assistant**

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____