

Western Carolina University
College of Health and Human Sciences
School of Health Sciences

Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program

STUDENT HANDBOOK:

A Student Guide for Recreational Therapy Majors

Revised August 2017

The Recreational Therapy (RT) Program was the first stand-alone Recreational Therapy degree program in the United States. WCU's program became the first CAAHEP accredited RT program in the country through the Commission on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education programs [CARTE] in 2011 and was re-accredited in 2016. It is recognized for quality education in recreational therapy by professionals and educators throughout the country. The Program continues to distinguish itself and to offer excellent learning opportunities to students, alumni and professionals.

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General Faculty, Staff, and Program Information

Dean of the College of Health & Human Sciences: Dr. Doug Keskula
Associate Dean of the College of Health & Human Sciences: Dr. David Hudson
Director, School of Health Sciences: Dr. Ericka Zimmerman
Administrative Support Specialist: Jane Buchanan
Administrative Support Specialist: Bobbi Smith

The B.S. in Recreational Therapy consists of 120 hours including Liberal Studies requirements (42 hours), the recreational therapy major of 71 hours including recreational therapy and supportive coursework, and electives (7 to 14 hours, dependent on liberal studies choices).

The Recreational Therapy offices are located in the Health and Human Sciences building on the West Campus on the fourth floor. Recreational Therapy faculty members include:

Jennifer Hinton, Ph.D., LRT/CTRS, FDRT
Associate Professor, Program Director and Clinical Coordinator
jlhinton@wcu.edu

Paige Dagenhard, Ph.D, LRT/CTRS
Assistant Professor
pcdagenhard@wcu.edu

Debbie Logan, M.S., LRT/CTRS
Assistant Professor
drlogan@wcu.edu

Adjunct faculty often teach courses and supplement instruction in the curriculum. In 2017, Todd Davidson will be a clinical instructor.

Advisory Committee

WCU Recreational Therapy (RT) Program regularly consults with an established advisory committee on issues pertinent to the RT curriculum and program. The following individuals serve on that committee in 2017:

Krystal Drakin, LRT/CTRS
Recreational Therapist, Broughton Hospital

Miranda Evans, LRT/CTRS
Director of Activities, The Laurels of Green Tree Ridge

David Hudson, Ph.D., MS, PT
Associate Dean, WCU

Lisa Love, LRT/CTRS
Recreational Therapist, J.F. Keith Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center

Marcus Metcalf, MSW
Director, HIGHTS

Gretchen Reece, RT Student
WCU

Richard Shaw, CTRS
Experiential Therapy Manager, Youth Villages Inner Harbour Campus

INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY AND THE RECREATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Introduction to Western Carolina University

Western Carolina University (WCU) is a comprehensive state-supported university comprised of the Graduate School, and six undergraduate colleges: College of Health and Human Sciences, Fine and Performing Arts, Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education and Allied Professions. Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of WCU. The commitment of the WCU community to service, research, and creative activities complements the central mission and extends the benefits of its scholarship to society. The University seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines. As a major public resource for western North Carolina, the University assists agencies in the region through the expertise of its faculty and staff. The WCU general catalog, *The Record*, contains authoritative information concerning the University, student services, academic regulations, the University calendar, and degree requirements. *The Record* is in both undergraduate and graduate versions and is accessible on the WCU website.

Accreditation

In 2011, WCU's RT Program was the first to be nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) through the Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education Programs (CARTE).

CAAHEP
25400 US Highway 19 N, Suite 158
Clearwater, FL 33756
(727) 210-2350
www.caahep.org

Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education (CARTE)
Chair: Bryan McCormick, Ph.D., CTRS, FDRT
Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education
C/O Bryan McCormick, Ph.D., CTRS Indiana University, Dept. of Recreation, Park & Tourism Studies
Bloomington , IN 47405-7109
Phone: 812 855-3482
Email: bmccormi@indiana.edu

Mission Statement

[Our Mission](#)

Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences.

It is the mission of the recreational therapy curriculum to provide students preparing for health care careers to become recreational therapists with a sound conceptual foundation and entry-level professional preparation in the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice in recreational therapy.

The WCU Recreational Therapy Curriculum is one of the academic degree programs in the School of Health Sciences, College of Health and Human Sciences. The mission of the College of Health and Human Sciences is to provide a dynamic learning community that prepares

individuals for professional life by providing quality educational experiences that promote scholarship, engagement and life-long learning in a global environment. This goal will be met with active, scholarly, collaborative faculty. The college will be recognized for graduates who are ethical, adaptive, technically capable and innovative professionals.

The mission of the recreational therapy curriculum is linked to and is a reflection of both the mission of the College of Health and Human Sciences and the teaching and learning goals that constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University, to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines.

Quality Enhancement

The new Quality Enhancement Program is DegreePlus. WCU Recreational Therapy will begin work on these areas within the near future. From the DegreePlus website (<http://www.wcu.edu/discover/about/Accreditation/qep/>): *Western Carolina's upcoming Quality Enhancement Plan, DegreePlus, is a holistic approach to education that sets out to strengthen our incredible work around leadership, teamwork, professionalism and cultural responsiveness and to make it an intentional part of the curricular and co-curricular experience at WCU. Participation prepares students for life after Western Carolina.* WCU RT was a proud pilot program for the past QEP which helped students to integrate other learning skills into their curricular activities including integrating information from a variety of context, solving complex problems, communicating effectively and responsibly, practicing civic engagement, and clarifying and acting on purpose and values. These principles remain embedded in our curriculum.

What is a competent and qualified recreational therapy professional?

A competent and qualified recreational therapy professional meets the standards according to the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC). NCTRC completed a thorough job analysis in 2014. This job analysis can be found [here](#).

The knowledge and skills for recreational therapy practice are defined in the National Job Analysis of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) and form the basis for evaluation for eligibility and the content outline of the national certification exam. The knowledge areas of the National Job Analysis are presented within recreational therapy academic coursework as well as service learning and internship experiences. The skill areas of the National Job Analysis are expressed primarily through the final clinical recreational therapy internship. This internship includes the successful completion of the didactic portion of their undergraduate education, a minimum of a 14-week, 560-hour clinical internship, and preparation for eligibility to sit for the national certification exam administered by NCTRC. Upon passage of the national exam and state licensure application, graduates of the WCU recreational therapy degree program are also eligible for licensure in other states.

Admission Requirements and Processes for the B.S. Degree in Recreational Therapy

There are specific admission requirements for all students entering the recreational therapy degree program. Students must be declared as a Recreational Therapy pre-major (PREC) and it is strongly recommended that they have completed RTH 200, or are taking it concurrently, before they apply for the program. The minimum GPA to submit an application is 2.5. The admission process is competitive with approximately fifteen students accepted each semester, so a student with a minimum GPA of 2.5 may not get into the program. These requirements include an application process that includes description of their interest in the field, a list of related service activities and Recreational Therapy Association involvement, and an essay on their desire to be a recreational therapy major. Students also pre-test on recreational therapy knowledge, skills and abilities (completed in the RTH 200 course). All students at the sophomore level are welcome to

enroll in RTH 200 Foundations of Recreational Therapy to learn more about the major and help determine their interest in pursuing a degree in this field.

How Does a Student Apply for Recreational Therapy Program Admission?

All pre-recreational therapy majors have been assigned between Dr. Jennifer Hinton, Paige Dagenhard and Debbie Logan as their advisors, and can always access information from them. Prospective applicants may also schedule an appointment with the Program Director (Jennifer Hinton – jlhinton@wcu.edu) if they have further questions. Jennifer Hinton sends application materials to all PREC majors in the second month of each fall and spring semester. Applications are then submitted electronically via email to Dr. Hinton by the deadline posted for the end of the semester. Faculty review and rank applications individually, then meet after grades are posted for the semester (the week after finals week) to make admission decisions.

Written Essay Required for Admission to the Recreational Therapy Program

This 400-500 word essay should explain why the student is choosing to study recreational therapy. Resources and website information on the profession are provided to the student in RTH 200 to help them in preparing their reflective essay that explores their thoughts, personal experiences, and the reasons that have led them to choose this major.

Minimum Requirements for Participation as a Recreational Therapy Major at WCU

Listed below are the minimum requirements for participation in the Western Carolina University Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program.

- The participant must be enrolled as a student at Western Carolina University.
- Students must be admitted to and enrolled in the Recreational Therapy Major within the School of Health Sciences in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Western Carolina University.
- Students must meet all additional requirements for admission as outlined under the section entitled “Admission Requirements for the B.S. Degree in Recreational Therapy” in this handbook.
- Students must meet the academic expectations of the Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program, the School of Health Sciences, the College of Health and Human Sciences and Western Carolina University as outlined in this handbook and the Western Carolina University Undergraduate Catalog in effect at the time of your admission to the program.
- Students must receive a “C” or above in RTH coursework. If a student receives below a “C” in an RTH class, they must retake the course. In the event of RTH 352, the student will not be permitted to take upper level coursework until that course has been completed.
- All recreational therapy majors must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 to remain in the major. Students dropping below 2.5 will be placed on probation for one academic semester to bring their GPA up to or above the minimum 2.5 required. If the student’s GPA does not meet or exceed 2.5 after a semester on probation, the student will be removed from the RT major and placed in the Pre-RT Major until such time as his/her GPA is brought back up to the minimum 2.5 required of all majors. They may then re-apply for the major at that time.
- Students must meet the Technical Standards of the Recreational Therapy Program as stated in this handbook.
- Students must provide their own transportation to clinical education and service learning sites.

Academic Expectations in Recreational Therapy

Academic Integrity Policy

The Recreational Therapy Program follows the Academic Integrity Policy established for Western Carolina University. The policy is found [here](#), along with the forms that must be completed in case of a violation. All RT majors must read the policy, and sign noting that they have read and will abide by the policy, during each fall and spring advising meeting.

Double Majors

Students may choose to have more than one major while enrolled at Western Carolina University. However, more than four years may be required to complete the Recreational Therapy major in conjunction with another major or more than one minor or pre-requisites for various areas of graduate studies. One thing to keep in mind: after 140 credit hours, you will be charged tuition and a half for each credit hour

Grade Appeals

Academic Regulations are clearly outlined in the current undergraduate catalog each year. These include regulations for appealing academic actions, such as final course grades. For information regarding your rights to appeal a grade, or similar issues such as grade replacement, please see the appropriate [catalog](#) on the Registrar's site.

Practical Learning

Service learning is where you can put into practice what you are learning in recreational therapy. Service learning will take place in three different areas.

- I. Service Learning attached to a course: Several courses in the major have a service learning component and/ or observational hours. Two courses are service learning designated: RTH 360 and RTH 470.
- II. Practical experiences in summers and on vacations: You may choose to take a job or volunteer in summer camps, or volunteer or aide in a hospital or nursing home. The more varied your experience with people with disabilities, the more competent you will become and the more marketable you will be. These are not required by the Program, and are not covered by University liability insurance policies.
- III. The internship: Twelve credits of hands on work under the supervision of a certified and/ or licensed recreational therapist (you must work under an LRT in the four states with licensure, including NC) will be your chance to put your knowledge and skills into action in a setting that you will choose with the help of the pre-internship teacher and your advisor.

It is very important that you take your service learning opportunities seriously and that you put your heart into the experience. Expectations related to all service learning experiences:

- Dress appropriately for service learning. Remember: you are representing the profession of recreational therapy in the community when completing service learning. In two clinical courses (RTH 360 and RTH 405) you will be required to wear a WCU RT purple polo purchased by your student fees. In other courses, dress requirements will be specified.
- Always show up early for the experiences. Reliability is key in working with clients and other professionals/volunteers. Be aware that some agencies will not allow you to complete your learning requirements for that day if you are late.

- Practice professional boundaries. Do not give phone numbers or connect on social media with clients with whom you will be working. Physical boundaries are also important. Hugging or flirting can easily become misinterpreted so should be avoided.
- Stay focused on the clients. Don't "hang out" with other students.
- Be professional-Keep things confidential, treat other faculty, clients and students with respect. Keep your integrity at all times.
- You may be nervous and unsure of what to do with certain clients who may be difficult to understand or puts you at unease. Keep at it, learn from the experience, and ask questions when you reflect on the experience.
- Make connections with what you are learning in class and what you are experiencing.
- Introduce yourself as a recreational therapy student, not as a recreational therapist or recreational therapist in training. Practice explaining what recreational therapy to individuals on site.

Senior Clinical Internship in Recreational Therapy

After completion of all recreational therapy coursework and major requirements, the student will complete a senior clinical internship. The Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program has legal contracts with agencies across North Carolina and in other states that meet the requirements for a clinical affiliation with the College of Health and Human Sciences and the certification and licensure requirements for recreational therapy. A list of approved internship sites is maintained by the Program Director and a Recreational Therapy Internship Manual is available for further information. When students enroll in RTH 395 Pre-Intern Seminar the semester before their planned senior clinical internship, they will prepare a professional resume and cover letters, and will be instructed on the application process for a recreational therapy clinical internship. While students complete their clinical internship (a minimum of 14 weeks, 560 hours onsite at the agency), they are enrolled in RTH 484 and RTH 485 for a total of 12 credit hours.

Advising Expectations in Recreational Therapy

Advisor Roles and Responsibilities

The advisor's role is to provide support, guidance, information, and referrals that enable the Pre-RT and RT student to take an active role in developing his or her program. The following are the central forms of support and guidance by the advisor:

- To assist the student in exploring his or her therapist style/s and the populations with whom they would like to work;
- To offer advice in the selection and sequencing of courses that meet requirements for graduation;
- To provide guidance and make referrals that help the student explore career options consistent with the program of study;
- To keep informed about University policies, regulations, programs and procedures;
- To discuss student strengths and weaknesses in relation to coursework and professionalism.
- To discuss technical standards, recreational therapy standards in the field, and explain curricular guidelines.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

The student's role is to take primary responsibility for the development of their academic program and for meeting all graduation requirements. In the advisor-advisee relationship, student responsibilities include the following:

- To make appointments with the advisor in a timely manner that ensures the advisor is kept informed about the student's progress and performance;
- To understand the courses needed for the RT degree and keep track of their progress through the degree audit.
- To become knowledgeable about University policies, programs and procedures;
- To maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average, and continually meet all technical standards.
- To be proactive with regard to career planning and to actively involve the advisor as an adjunct to the development of career goals and objectives.
- To come prepared for advising times with degree audit and courses needed for the next semester.

Professionalism

It is of vital importance to the profession of Recreational Therapy that a high level of professionalism is maintained by all Recreational Therapy majors and pre-majors. Of particular importance is your sensitivity, confidentiality and professional attitude. This includes being prompt to service learning and education assignments, dressing professionally and appropriately and conducting oneself in a professional manner at all times. Attire appropriate to the activity is required for all clinical education experiences. You will receive guidelines from faculty for each class and Recreational Therapy Association sponsored event. Recreational Therapy Students must maintain a professional relationship with all peers, clients and faculty at all times. Please understand that your actions outside of the classroom, service learning projects, and clinical education experiences are a direct reflection of you, the faculty and staff at WCU, the Recreational Therapy Education Program and the profession as a whole.

Critical Policies and Additional Information for Majors in the Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program

Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy

The Recreational Therapy Program follows the Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy established for the College of Health and Human Sciences. The policy is found [here](#) under *Policies for Students in the College of Health and Human Sciences*. All RT majors must read the policy, and sign noting that they have read and will abide by the policy, during each fall and spring advising meeting.

If a student needs assistance with drug or alcohol abuse, or has a previous related conviction, it is recommended that they speak with their advisor early in the Program so that appropriate assistance can be obtained. Continued substance abuse, or prior convictions, may prohibit a student from continuing in the major and/ or practicing in the field.

Attendance, Commitment and Potential Absences

Attendance and Commitment

RT faculty expect you to attend *all* classes, clinical opportunities and meetings. Be on time and develop a good reputation among your fellow students and faculty. There is a strong correlation between good grades and class attendance. Additionally, you are preparing for a professional career in healthcare and it is expected that you have the commitment to your profession, your clients, and your colleagues. Attendance and arriving on time for scheduled events is a must

Each day in your major you will have opportunities to demonstrate your commitment and reliability. This is essential for a recreational therapy major and your behaviors will affect the type of clinical internship you are able to secure during your senior year. Prospective internship supervisors and employers do call us. When in class, be curious and involve yourself in discussion. This will be reflected in any reference that you get from the faculty. We have to be honest in our response, so make it easy for us to give out glowing praise.

Faculty expect that if you have a potentially contagious illness you will NOT attend class. *Spreading disease is poor health prevention.* The following is from University Health Services. Please keep it in mind and, again, do NOT come to class with a fever or flu symptoms! *There are basic steps to prevention and common symptoms to help recognize the flu. One of the major concerns with universities across the country are the necessary steps to comply with CDC recommended isolation of patients with flu or flu like illness. The current recommendation is to remain in self-isolation for 24 hours after fever. Many students may feel that he or she cannot afford to miss classes and other activities for that length of time. Health Services will work with the Provost's Office to assist with communicating to faculty regarding flu-related excused class absences.*

Out of class expectations

RT coursework is arranged so that juniors and seniors do not have Friday classes. This is done so that you are *available* on Fridays to attend clinical observations and experiences. Several upper level courses will occasionally require Friday, and sometimes Saturday, out of class work.

Absences for Religious Observances

The RTH Program faculty recognizes the right of the student to practice their religion freely and to be excused from course/clinical attendance to observe their individual religious practices. WCU allows two days of absence from each academic year for religious observances required by faith. Students are encouraged to discuss these absences with the faculty member prior to the end of drop/add in case the absence will unavoidably keep the student from completing the requirements of the course. However, if the student completes the form and submits it to the instructor prior to the two-week time frame, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a required religious observance.

Cellular Phones

All cellular phones are to be turned **off** prior to beginning any class, service learning activity, or clinical education experience unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Cellular phones may be taken to the clinical education site and used **ONLY** in the case of medical emergency. At no time will the student be allowed personal calls during any clinical education assignment nor may the student engage in text messaging at any time in a class, service learning activity, or clinical education experience. When on site at a clinical agencies, students need to understand that different agencies will have separate regulations regarding cellphones for having a cellphone and students must abide first by that agency's standards.

Confidentiality of Student Records

In accordance with institutional policy and the U.S. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the RTH faculty protect the privacy of students' educational records. The RT Program does not release private records without prior written consent of the student. Any copies of records should be obtained prior to graduation. Students and former students have the right to review their official records.

Criminal Background Screening for Students

The Recreational Therapy Program follows the Criminal Background Screening for Students Policy established for the College of Health and Human Sciences. The policy is found [here](#) under *Policies for Students in the College of Health and Human Sciences*. All RT majors must read the policy, and sign noting that they have read and will abide by the policy, during each fall and spring advising meeting.

Students are responsible for immediately notifying the RTH Program Director of any criminal charges and/or convictions incurred during the students' time in the RTH Program.

All students must complete a criminal background screening the semester before their internship as part of RTH 395 *at their own expense*. This screening must be cleared for a student to participate in internship. Additional agencies may require background screenings for potential volunteer work, and clinical sites may also require additional screenings.

If a student has a previous conviction that they feel may impede their ability to practice, it is recommended that they speak with their advisor early in the Program so that appropriate assistance can be obtained. Prior convictions, dependent on type, may prohibit a student from continuing in the major and/ or practicing in the field.

Disciplinary Procedures

Student Right to Appeal

A student may appeal any decision to enforce discipline as a result of academic or behavioral misconduct to the RTH Program faculty. Students must submit written appeals to the Program Director within five days of the disciplinary decision, or the School Director if the Program Director was in direct control of the situation/ decision.

Code of Conduct

Students must read and adhere to the WCU Code of Student Conduct. Factors that may affect the severity of the University sanction(s) may include the present demeanor and past conduct record of the Student, the nature of the incident, the severity of any damage, injury, or harm resulting from the incident, and whether the incident was motivated by bias based on actual or perceived race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability.

There are separate policies for Alcohol and Illegal Drug Procedures and for the Criminal Background Screening which are administered through the College of Health and Human Sciences. The following procedures are specific to recreational therapy and have been established to ensure the smooth operation of the Western Carolina University Recreational Therapy Education Program and the College of Health and Human Sciences. Offenses of the rules and regulations of the University or the Recreational Therapy Technical Standards shall be deemed as either "minor offenses" or "disciplinary offenses". The compilation of three minor offenses shall be the equivalent of one disciplinary offense. Each disciplinary offense shall require the student to appear before the Recreational Therapy Faculty for disciplinary action or dismissal from the Recreational Therapy Education Program. The following three steps indicate formal procedures resulting from disciplinary offenses of the WCU Recreational Therapy Education Program. All disciplinary actions by the Recreational Therapy Faculty shall be entered into the recreational therapy student's permanent file. It is very important to let your advisor know if you have had any misdemeanors or felonies prior to getting into the program, because that could prohibit you from becoming certified.

Step 1: When applicable, two "minor offenses" by the student will result in a meeting with the primary RT Advisor. This meeting will serve as a warning that any further offenses of the

Recreational Therapy Education Program rules and regulations will result in formal action against the recreational therapy student.

Step II: The initial “disciplinary offense” shall result in a student / RT Faculty formal meeting. Minutes of the meeting as well as a written response, including any disciplinary action to be taken, will be filed in the Program Director’s office. One copy of the written response will be sent to the recreational therapy student’s local address within ten (10) days. An additional copy will be placed in the student’s permanent file. A second “disciplinary offense meeting” with the RT Faculty will minimally result in a probationary period of one semester.

Step III: The “third disciplinary offense” shall result in immediate dismissal from the WCU Recreational Therapy Education Program.

Minor Offenses: Minor offenses include, but are not limited to, dress code violations, tardiness to assigned clinical education experiences, or failure to complete required documentation.

Disciplinary Offenses: Disciplinary offenses include, but are not limited to, failure to complete recreational therapy tasks as assigned by the clinical supervisor, failure to attend assigned clinical education experiences, insubordination, failure to perform duties in a professional manner or failure to act in a manner consistent with the standards of WCU, the Recreational Therapy Technical Standards, and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association Code of Ethics.

Appeals Policy: Any recreational therapy student has the right to appeal all disciplinary decisions made by the RT Faculty. All appeals must be typed and submitted to the Program Director’s office within seven (7) days of receiving the disciplinary written response. The RT Faculty in conjunction with the Department Head for the School of Health Sciences will review the appeal and submit a written response within ten (10) days of receipt of the appeal letter of the student.

Email

The RTH Program faculty communicate frequently via email. Students are expected to check their WCU email address account daily for email communications during the fall and spring semesters and every week during winter and summer sessions. All RTH Program communication via email will be sent to the students’ WCU account.

Health and Wellness

Blood Borne Pathogens Policy

Policies have been developed to protect health care workers from blood-borne pathogens (BBP). The blood-borne pathogens of main concern to recreational therapists are HIV and Hepatitis B. Recreational therapists can be exposed in a variety of ways; including but not limited to bloody wounds, vomit , saliva, etc.. Therefore, it is imperative to practice preventative measures at all times.

OSHA Regulations: OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has developed federal regulations for employees whose jobs may put them at risk to blood-borne pathogens. All of these guidelines must be followed at all times when treating patients in the health care setting.

If you have a risk of exposure to a blood-borne pathogen, it is required that the minimum proper precautions be adhered to. The health care professional must minimally wear latex gloves when exposed to any body fluids. If a glove should tear, it should be replaced immediately. In addition, one must change gloves if worn for more than ten (10) minutes. Some gloves may be slightly permeable; so two layers may be worn. After use, carefully remove gloves and discard them in a biohazard waste container or bag. Your hands should be washed thoroughly after wearing

gloves or handling any item contaminated with body fluids. In addition, hands should be washed between contacts with each patient in order to prevent the spread of possibly infectious materials.

Any contaminated area (treatment table, counter top, floor, etc.) should be cleaned thoroughly to help decontaminate surfaces. Sources recommend using a 1:10 bleach-water solution, which needs to be made daily to be effective. Western Carolina University will purchase appropriate cleansing solutions to treat exposed areas. These cleaning materials will be made available in each clinical setting. In addition, tables and counters must be cleaned with an appropriate cleaning solution between each use.

When cleaning an area that may be contaminated with a BBP, it is advised to wear latex gloves and absorb the fluids with paper towels, not terry cloth towels. Discard soiled towels in the biohazard waste container bags. Saturate the area with the appropriate cleansing solution, allowing the solution to soak ten to twenty minutes whenever possible. Clean the area with another paper towel utilizing rubber gloves. All cleaning materials should go in the biohazard bags for disposal after use. After cleaning, remember to wash hands thoroughly, using proper hand-washing procedures.

Method of Compliance: There are many ways to minimize and prevent exposure to a blood-borne pathogen. These include implementing work practice controls, such as having rules and regulations in the work place, providing and using personal protective equipment and consistently implementing appropriate housecleaning procedures.

Personal protective equipment is used to provide a barrier between the health care provider and the exposed blood-borne pathogen. Personal protective equipment consists of latex gloves, goggles, face shields, CPR masks and gowns. It is recommended that the personal protective equipment be inspected periodically for any defects to ensure its effectiveness. Any reusable equipment should be cleaned thoroughly and decontaminated after use. Single use equipment should be disposed of in red biohazard bags and placed in the appropriate containers.

Housekeeping is the third area of compliance. This involves maintaining all equipment used in recreational therapy interventions in a clean and sanitary condition. In order to meet this requirement, it is necessary clean all recreational therapy equipment after each use and before returning equipment to the recreational therapy office.

If an employee or recreational therapy student is involved in an incident that exposes her or him to a blood-borne pathogen, he must receive medical consultation and treatment as soon as possible. This follow-up care is available at the WCU Student Health Center. All costs post-exposure care is the responsibility of the student.

Proper Hand-Washing Procedures

Thorough hand-washing is the BEST way to prevent the spread of infection.

Hand-washing Procedures:

1. Use continuously running water.
2. Use a generous amount of soap.
3. Apply soap with vigorous contact on all surfaces of hands. (nails, fingers, hands, forearms)
4. Wash hands for AT LEAST 10 seconds. (Sing the *Happy Birthday Song* twice.)
5. Clean under and around fingernails.
6. Rinse with your hands down, so that runoff goes into the sink and not down your arms.
7. Avoid splashing.
8. Dry well with paper towels.
9. Use a towel to turn the water off.
10. Discard the towels into a bag provided for that purpose.

First Aid, CPR and AED Certifications

All RTH majors are expected to take HLTH 250 prior to their internship. Students are advised to take the course during the semester prior to, or concurrently with, the pre-internship seminar course (RTH 395) so as to have current certifications during their internship.

If a student maintains these certifications due to a job or other reason, they may give copies of their certification cards to their academic advisor. *A substitution course, in another health sciences area, must be taken to complete the degree audit.*

Health Insurance Coverage

Accidents or illness may occur as a result of coming in contact with the clinical and field internship environments. Medical evaluation, treatment, and follow-up care following an accident or incident are the *financial responsibility of the student*. Students must comply with the health insurance requirements of the University.

Immunization Policy and Forms

THIS CHHS POLICY IS BEING UPDATED

General statement on immunizations

Students are required to complete testing and immunizations for several courses in the RTH Program. For example, students attending observations at Broughton Hospital for the RTH 405 class must have a current flu injection. Students in the RTH 360 class need to show proof of negative TB test. All students must comply with required immunizations and testing for internship sites chosen.

Hepatitis B Vaccinations

Hepatitis B vaccinations are available to all certified and licensed recreational therapy staff and recreational therapy students via the Western Carolina University Health Center for a minimal fee. The Hepatitis B vaccinations consist of a series of three injections over a six-month period. It should be noted that the series of three injections does not guarantee immunization to Hepatitis B in all persons. Therefore, a follow-up antibody test is recommended but not required. If an employee or student declines to have the Hepatitis B vaccination, he or she must sign a vaccine declination form. However, if the employee or student changes his or her mind, he / she may still receive the vaccine at a later date. Vaccinations can be received at the Western Carolina University Student Health Center or can be obtained at an off-campus facility.

HIPAA Training

Starting in the fall of 2017, all RT Majors will be signed in to a HIPAA Training Module on Blackboard. All majors must *complete* the training and bring the attestation form to their FALL 1:1 advising session. This procedure will be repeated every year the student is a major in the Program.

Incident Reporting

All incidents, injuries, and unusual occurrences on campus are to be reported immediately no matter how minor they seem. Notify the instructor responsible for the course and complete a College of Health and Human Sciences Incident Report Form. Incident report forms can be obtained from RTH Program faculty members. All incidents, injuries, and unusual occurrences in the clinical or field setting are to be reported immediately.

Liability Insurance

Beginning in the fall of 2017, all recreational therapy majors in RTH 360 and RTH 484/485 (internship) will have professional liability insurance purchased for them yearly through their

student fees. This insurance is meant to cover the students for incidents that may occur working with clients during service learning courses and internships.

Recreational Therapy Association

The Recreational Therapy Association (RTA) is run by elected RT majors and is for students majoring in recreational therapy and in the Pre-Recreational Therapy major. It is very important that students take an active role in RTA. RTA helps students go to conferences, provides service to the community, raises funds to bring experts in recreational therapy to campus to teach such specialized techniques as aquatic therapy, adapted wheelchair sports, and other topics, to fund field trips to specialized recreational therapy programs, provides leadership development for students in managing a professional organization, and will have activities and events for students to get to know each other and to bond as future professional recreational therapists. RTA also serves as a voice for students to speak up for their education and opportunities.

Semester Calendar

The semester calendar is available each semester. It contains important deadlines for pre-registration advisement, registration, filing an application for diploma/graduation, etc. Students may obtain the semester calendar from the WCU Registrar's Office website, www.registrar.wcu.edu

There are some underlying ideas that we would like you to consider very carefully once you are accepted as a major in the Recreational Therapy B.S. Degree Program, as they will help you get the most out of the recreational therapy program and enable you to get a good job once you graduate. These ideas are about *commitment, studying, involvement, time management, maturity and writing skills.*

Sexual Harassment Policy

If there ever is any *inappropriate* or *unwelcome* behavior in any RTH course that is of a sexual nature, on the part of the instructor or peers, it must be attended to and it must cease. This requires effective communication and a system for registering complaint with faculty, School of Health Sciences Director, and/or a liaison. Students should have a familiarity with and understanding of this policy and of the grievance procedures for individual action. Actions may be in the manner of a formal complaint procedure or in the manner of informal assistance. Students should also be aware of the availability of liaisons in the Health and Human Sciences Building with whom grievances can initially be discussed. If the infraction has occurred at a clinical site, it is imperative that the student discuss the incident with the faculty member to determine appropriate action. This may be dependent on the nature of the infraction, and if the perpetrator was a client, family, or staff member.

Social Networking Sites

Students must be concerned with any behavior that might embarrass themselves, their fellow students, preceptors, clinical sites, the Program/faculty, and /or the University. *This includes any and all activities conducted online.* Western Carolina University recognizes individual's expression of first amendment rights of free speech, including participation online social networking sites. The University does not place any restrictions on the use of these sites by students. Students are reminded that as an RTH Program student you are a representative of the RTH Program, the profession, and the University and you are always in the eye of the public (even online). Please keep the following in mind:

- Understand that anything you post online is available to anyone on the planet. Any text or photo is completely out of your control the moment you place it online (even if you limit access to your site).
- Do not post information, photos, or other items online that could embarrass you, your fellow classmates, clinical sites, faculty, or the University. This includes photos and items that may be posted by others on your page.

- Students will face disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal for violation of the standards of philosophies of the University and/or the Program.
- Students should be aware that by posting identifiable photos of patients and/or patient belongings they are violating federal rules and regulations (HIPAA). Students who violate HIPAA can face disciplinary action up to and including Program dismissal.

Technical Standards

Technical standards are to delineate the technical cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills deemed essential to complete this program and to perform as a competent generalist in recreational therapy.

The technical standards for the RT Program can be found on the RT website [here](#). All RT majors must read the Technical Standards, and sign noting that they have read and will abide by the policy, during each fall and spring advising meeting.

If a student needs assistance with Technical Standards, a meeting will be initiated with the Office of Accessibility Resources to determine appropriate accommodations. Technical Standards violations may prohibit a student from continuing in the major and/ or practicing in the field.

Transportation

Students are expected to provide their own transportation to and from their clinical assignments. Any traffic violations, fees, or fines incurred en route to and from clinical assignments are the responsibility of the student. During orientation to each clinical facility, students will be advised where to park their automobiles.

Tips for Success

Studying

Put in the time to complete projects on time and to study. Be serious about this. Maintaining a 2.5 or higher GPA requires that you put in the time to study and complete projects satisfactorily. Studying is a daily task- not something to be reserved for the day before the exam. Don't aim for just scraping through with a B or C. Do your best in everything. We also suggest that you selectively buy some of your text-books for reference material in the future. Passing the certification exam and your state licensure requirements at the end of your schooling is not a given so keeping resources is crucial to becoming an LRT/ CTRS (Licensed Recreational Therapist/Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist).

Involvement

All employers ask about this. They are looking for 'go-getters' who will be highly involved and show resourcefulness. They can tell how much you were involved during your undergraduate studies by reading your resume and references. Start building your resume early in your undergraduate studies by involving yourself in the Recreational Therapy Association (RTA), volunteering for service learning opportunities, and completing the highest quality class projects. Get involved. Be a member of NCRTA, go beyond service requirements of classes, spend as much time as possible with clients as you can, and read about our profession regularly.

Time Management

Start projects early. Library research takes time and you may want to request inter-library loan materials. Don't expect that you can get these on short notice. Starting class projects and assignments early may also enable you to have a peer or faculty member review your work before you submit it. If you catch each other's mistakes through good peer review and editing then everyone's grades will go up. Do the readings for each class before that class period so you can ask intelligent questions on the readings. This will also help you to retain information more easily. Trying to cram for several courses the last week of the semester is an extremely poor practice as the amount of information will simply be too much. And remember, after you complete your studies, you still have to pass a national standardized exam. The materials you learn in your

classes are the materials that will be covered on that national exam. So plan your time and your projects so you can get the most out of your studies.

Professional Writing

Peer review and edit each others' work and do it honestly and in a forthright fashion. If you need additional assistance, use the Writing and Learning Commons on campus (Belk Building). For many of your projects, you will have to make edits after your final grade so that the documents are suitable for your online portfolio. You will put your portfolio of your artifacts and samples of your course work together in courses along the way in recreational therapy curriculum. Many seniors use these as additional materials to send for hiring. You do not want to present poor examples of your work for an internship interview. Poor writing samples may limit your opportunities to gain a good clinical internship, and, ultimately, a good job in the field. Having good writing skills makes less work later and increases your grades at the same time. The ability to write will only improve with continual feedback. It is also suggested to rewrite assignments using feedback from your professors to prepare the document for your portfolio. Accept feedback professionally and don't take it personally.

You will be required throughout your studies in recreational therapy to format your papers according to **APA Guidelines**. You will be taught APA in the RTH 352 course, but it requires consistent practice and reference to the APA Style Manual. If you are unfamiliar with APA Guidelines for writing papers and referencing, please use the Writing and Learning Commons online or in-person resources.

Public Speaking

You will have a number of projects in Recreational Therapy and support coursework which require you to speak to the full class or a small group. See this as an opportunity to improve your oral communication skills. These skills are very valuable in the practice of recreational therapy.

Maturity

As a major, you will be representing the Recreational Therapy Program and our profession in courses taught by other departments and in service learning situations. Your actions will reflect on all recreational therapists. Show your professors respect by being on time and acting like professionals. See yourself through their eyes. Appearance, dress and mannerisms can make a huge impression. You may be asking some of those professors for a reference and can only expect them to be truthful when they describe your professionalism to potential employers. Work hard and impress them.

Myths and Realities

Be prepared for fellow students, friends and relatives to ask what recreational therapy is. This can get old fast and may make you want to avoid the topic all together. Instead of feeling embarrassed or getting upset about it, take it as a challenge. Be proud and explain what recreational therapy is. How you present your major will definitely affect how others react to it. This is a good thing and will help you when clients and other professionals ask you the same question. Recreational therapy is not an easy major and should be approached with energy and enthusiasm.

More Realities

You will learn about Recreational Therapy inside and outside the classroom. We highly encourage students to work on their own lifestyle issues during your university years. If you go out from the program with good grades, but don't live a lifestyle that reflects recreational therapy, it will be difficult to be effective in recreational therapy. You need to stay curious outside the classroom, maintain a healthy lifestyle, work on your communication skills, try new interventions/activities, lead groups, and volunteer as much as you can with people with disabilities. You need to read inside and outside our field from psychology to stories about people with disabilities to experts in various modalities and facilitation techniques. It is an information sharing age and anyone can learn from a variety of resources. Make time for this.

Final Thoughts

Welcome to Recreational Therapy. You are joining a profession which is fun, yet challenging. We are in critical times where there are greater demands for good quality therapists than ever before. From the obesity epidemic to an aging population, the demand for rehabilitation and community services for people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, qualified recreational therapists are needed more than any other time in our history. If you work hard, stay fit mentally and physically, learn the field and develop your skills, you will have a long and exciting career. For more information on the professional job of a recreational therapist, visit the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook overview RT at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/recreational-therapists.htm>