**Application for Admission to B.S. in RECREATIONAL THERAPY**

School of Health Sciences, College of Health and Human Sciences

Western Carolina University

**RT Program Overview**

**Our Vision:** To be leaders in innovative, progressive recreational therapy education that positively impacts the lives of people with disabilities through the use of recreational therapy.

**Our Mission:** The mission of the Recreational Therapy Program is to cultivate students who have the knowledge, skills and abilities to become exceptional recreational therapy practitioners.

We understand that to positively impact the lives of people with disabilities, it is important to recruit a diverse workforce into the health and human services industries. When we evaluate applications, we seek individuals who have valuable life experiences, differing ability levels, and divergent backgrounds. Each applicant has a unique path that brings them to applying for this opportunity, and we seek to understand what brings you to this profession.

**General Application Guidelines**

Application Deadline: We will be accepting applications on or before September 15th. Questions, and applications, should be directed to Paige Dagenhard-Trainer, Program Director at [pcdagenhard@wcu.edu](mailto:pcdagenhard@wcu.edu).

Guidelines

To apply for the major, you must:

* 1. Hold Pre-Recreational Therapy Major status (PREC). Applicants must be accepted at Western Carolina University and pre-recreational therapy majors (PREC) before the application deadline.
  2. Have taken or be concurrently enrolled in, RTH 200 (Foundations of Recreational Therapy) and BIOL 291 (Anatomy and Physiology I). *Students can transfer these courses in from another college or university.*
  3. Currently have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA from WCU (first semester transfer students may use the GPA from their previous institution). The average GPA for admitted students over the past three years has ranged from 2.8 – 4.0 with an average of approximately 3.6.

By applying to Dr. Dagenhard-Trainer, you are certifying that you have met the minimum guidelines for application.

Application process

After an initial review of applications, RTH faculty will conduct small group interviews with finalists to make decisions about the final candidates for the major. Acceptance letters will be distributed before Advising Day in October. Students will have 3 days to accept or decline admittance to the program. If an opening becomes available, faculty will consult a waitlist for the Program.

**Application for the Recreational Therapy Major**

*Please type this application form and turn it in as a Word document to Paige Dagenhard-Trainer (*[*pcdagenhard@wcu.edu*](mailto:pcdagenhard@wcu.edu) *) electronically no later than 5 p.m. on September 15th.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Student ID (92#) |  |
| Email address |  |
| Phone number |  |

**Experience working with people with disabilities**

*Why we request this information*: We believe that experience working with people with disabilities- especially non-family members- helps an individual gain perspective on the needs of individuals one would serve as a recreational therapist in the future. Students who have many hours working with people with disabilities gain more points on this section of the application than those with minimal hours. We also understand that some applicants have more recently found this path to recreational therapy and have not yet had an opportunity to gain depth or breadth of experience. This is one way that you can differentiate yourself on your application.

Please document your service (paid or unpaid) directly working with individuals with disabilities. Required class experiences for RTH or other majors will be accepted if appropriate to the goal of working in RT. Hours can be counted for up to three years prior to September 15th at maximum (i.e., for applications in fall 2023, students can have hours from 9/15/2020-9/15/2023). *Please add additional rows as needed*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agency | Dates Worked | Hours Worked | Primary tasks/ responsibilities |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total Hours: | |  |  |

**Recreational Therapy Association**

*Why we request this information:* We see that individuals who have an opportunity to participate in the social, educational, and service events offered by the student club have a better understanding of the RT profession, become better connected to their fellow majors and pre-majors, and have more opportunities for success in obtaining internships and jobs in the future. Students who have had high levels of involvement in the student Recreational Therapy Association are given more credit in this area of the application than students who have not been involved. We also understand that some applicants, especially our new transfer students or students who work extensively outside of the classroom, have had limited availability for club events. All club events (e.g., workshops and conferences, socials, service events), not just meetings, count for this section.

Participation in the student Recreational Therapy Association is highly valued. There is not a minimum expectation for consideration. Please do not submit items in this area that have already been submitted in the section *Experience working with people with disabilities*. *Please add additional rows as needed.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Event | Date(s) of participation | Hours of involvement | Additional comment about responsibilities or learning |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total Hours: | |  |  |

**Character Reference**

*Why we request this information:* Again, we know that applicants have had different paths to the major. This gives us an alternate piece of information to evaluate.

All students should submit a character reference. This reference should speak to your ability to work with others and your potential suitability for offering goal-oriented therapy for individuals with disabilities. In particular, please ask the person submitting the reference letter to comment on the following qualities:

* Judgement
* Adaptability
* Attention to detail
* Initiative
* Teamwork

Please make sure that the reference includes the name, title, and email address of the person submitting the reference.

**Preparedness for Recreational Therapy**

*Why we ask for this information:* This information helps us to know more about you, your professional path, and your intentions for recreational therapy practice in the future. It also helps us to evaluate your professional writing, and your readiness for RT coursework.

Please answer each of the two following questions. You have 250 words or less to answer each question. Please use a traditional essay format with paragraphs.

1. Describe the main factor in your personal experiences that has led you to study recreational therapy. Note: Sometimes, students have overcome extraordinary obstacles. Many students have overcome health issues, learning differences, and other life circumstances that have made their path to attending university more difficult. You may discuss these factors here, if appropriate.
2. The mission of the Recreational Therapy Program is to cultivate students who have the knowledge, skills and abilities to become exceptional recreational therapy practitioners. Every student comes in with qualities that help to form that foundation, before classes ever begin. What skill or quality do you feel that you possess that will help you to become an exceptional practitioner in RT?