CARTE Accreditation: Let’s Move the Profession Forward with Quality and Consistency

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1. Identify three ways CARTE accreditation contributes to enhanced quality of RT/TR academic preparation.

2. Give an example of how CARTE accreditation contributes to consistency of RT/TR academic preparation.

3. Discuss how CARTE accreditation can positively impact NCTRC credentialing and professional practice.
ATRA Higher Education Task Force (HETF)
- Was charged with investigating status of Education in RT/TR
- Goal to provide insight on educational needs for the profession
- Collected data from over 2500 RT professionals, educators, and students
- Two year process (2016-2018)
- Data used to make recommendations to the profession
Key recommendations included the following:

1. Require all TR/RT curricula to show consistency in learning outcomes that reflect entry-level competencies in the field.
2. Incorporate new and increasing levels of competencies into RT/TR curricula.
3. Improve the infrastructure for a graduated progression of quality fieldwork experiences.

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CARTE Accreditation is a means for achieving all of these.
Accreditation

- A process of validating of competence, credibility and/or authority.
- The primary way that students, families, employers and the public know that institutions provide a quality education.
- The accreditation process compares the institution and/or programs to educational and professional standards determined by specific accreditation organizations.

Types of accreditation included:
- Institutional vs Program
- Regional vs Professional
Program Accreditation

• Provides an evaluation and judgments of institutions and programs.
• Accreditation ensures access to qualified instructors, adequate curriculum and necessary support services.
• Offers guidelines that influence decisions regarding an educational program including:
  • specific student outcomes (knowledge, skills, and abilities),
  • the number of hours of a particular subject area offered, and
  • the types of learning experiences students undertake.
Council for Higher Education Accreditation

• An organization for degree-granting colleges and universities in the U.S.

• Purpose = provides national advocacy for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation in order to certify the quality of higher education accrediting organizations, including regional, faith-based, private career, and programmatic accrediting organizations.

• CHEA has approximately 3,000 academic institutions as members, and currently recognizes approximately 60 accrediting organizations.
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

- A programmatic postsecondary accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- Carries out its accrediting activities in cooperation with 25 review committees (Committees on Accreditation).
- CAAHEP currently accredits over 2200 entry level education programs in 32 health science professions including Recreational Therapy.
In April 2010, CARTE & ATRA made application to CAAHEP to:

- Recognize Recreational Therapy as an allied health profession,
- Accept ATRA as the sponsor for academic accreditation, and
- Accept CARTE as the Committee on Accreditation for Recreational Therapy Education.

Standards and Guidelines for Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education were initially accepted by CAAHEP on August 20, 2010.

CARTE standards were revised and approved by CAAHEP in July 2017.
Standards and Guidelines for Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education

• Sponsorship
• Program Goals and Outcomes
• Resources
  • Personnel: Program Director, Faculty, Clinical Instructors
  • Curriculum: classroom/lab space, competency requirements
• Student Evaluation and Outcomes
• Fair Practices
• Curriculum Competency Requirements
Require all TR/RT curricula to show consistency in learning outcomes that reflect entry-level competencies in the field.
It is imperative that we improve the consistency of a bachelor’s degree in TR/RT.

The key to consistent academic curricula is program accreditation.

The Committee for Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education (CARTE) through the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs is best positioned for this task.
Through CARTÉ Accreditation, Programs Must:

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<td>1</td>
<td>Ensure the achievement of program goals and learning domains.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Develop instruction that is an appropriate sequence of classroom, laboratory, and clinical activities.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Base instruction on clearly written course syllabi that include course description, course objectives, methods of evaluation, topic outline, and competencies required for graduation.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Demonstrate that it meets or exceeds the content and/or competencies specified in Appendix B.</td>
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There must be a **written statement of the program’s goals and learning domains** consistent with the expectations of the various communities of interest served by the educational program.

Provide the basis for **program planning, implementation, and evaluation.**

Must be **compatible** with the mission of the sponsoring institution(s), the expectations of the communities of interest, and nationally accepted standards of the roles and functions.

**Based upon the substantiated needs** of health care and human service providers and employers, and the educational needs of the students served by the educational program. (advisory board)
• All CARTE Accredited programs must have the following goal defining minimum expectations:

“To prepare competent entry-level recreational therapists in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains. “
**Evaluation of students** must be conducted **on a recurrent basis** and with sufficient frequency to provide both the students and program faculty with valid and timely indications of the students’ progress toward and achievement of the competencies and learning domains stated in the curriculum.

The program must **periodically assess its effectiveness** in achieving its stated goals and learning domains.
CARTE sets Minimum Thresholds for Program Quality

• Outcomes assessments must include, but are not limited to:
  • National credentialing examination performance
  • Programmatic retention/attrition
  • Graduate satisfaction
  • Employer satisfaction
  • Job (positive placement)
  • Programmatic summative measures
Incorporate new and increasing levels of competencies into RT/TR curricula

HETF Recommendation
NCTRC Certification Standards and CARTE Accreditation Standards

- Original CARTE standards developed to align with NCTRC standards current at that time
- CARTE standards enhanced and modified since OG
- CARTE standards currently exceed NCTRC standards
- If a student follows the curricula from beginning to end in a CARTE accredited program, they will meet NCTRC eligibility requirements.
NCTRC Academic Path Requirements for Eligibility Review
(modified from the current NCTRC standards:
https://www.nctrc.org/new-applicants/become-a-ctrs/)

• Enrollment in a baccalaureate degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university with a major in
  • (a) therapeutic recreation (recreation therapy);
  • (b) recreation or leisure with an option in therapeutic recreation;
  • (c) therapeutic recreation, recreation, or leisure in combination with other fields of study (e.g., Therapeutic Recreation and Health Studies; Recreation and Sport Management; Leisure and Tourism); and
  • (d) a major in another field of study with a concentration/emphasis/sub-plan/option/minor/certificate in recreation therapy/therapeutic recreation.

• Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses: A total of 18 semester...hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 15 semester ... hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation process is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours.

• Supportive Courses: A total of 18 semester hours
  • (3) semester hours or of anatomy and physiology
  • (3) semester hours abnormal psychology
  • (3) semester hours human growth and development across the lifespan.
  • The remaining semester hours or quarter hours of coursework must be fulfilled in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.
Considering Course Content

NCTRC coursework standard:

“.....no less than a minimum of 15 semester ... hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of five (5) courses in therapeutic recreation process is required and each course must be a minimum of three (3) credit hours.”

• THIS STANDARD IS CHANGING TO 6 courses, which means that most programs have 6 courses now.

Question: How many TR/RT programs currently are offering 5 courses in therapeutic recreation process and meeting only the minimum requirement?

BIGGER Question: What is the content of those 5 courses?
CARTE standards look at academic preparation using an **overall curriculum focus**.

CARTE *evaluates quality academic preparation by content* (meeting specific curriculum content competencies—quality v. quantity).

Standards do not have to be met in a specific course, but must be present in the curriculum **at an appropriate depth to prepare students for entry-level practice**.
Please note in your handout that there are detailed competencies for BOTH knowledge and skill in:

- Foundations
- All areas of the APIE process (4)
- Management
- Support coursework (A&P, Abnormal Psych, Human Growth & Dev)
- Additional recommend curriculum competencies (e.g., motor learning, counseling, group dynamics, pharmacology, etc.)
- Clinical education experiences (more than just internship)
Examples:
How can the CARTE Accreditation Process Improve a RT/TR Program?

SRU and WCU
Please look at your handout outlining differences in CARTE curricula for 8-semester plans across Programs

**WCU A vs. WCU B**

- Gained courses in:
  - research and evaluation (2)
  - ID/DD (1)
  - clinical labs (4)
  - modalities courses (6)
  - More strategically examined our SWOT through the CARTE accreditation processes.

**Slippery Rock University**

- Gained:
  - lab space
  - funds for equipment & supplies
  - release time for program director
  - recognition as a health & human services profession
  - increased budget (through lab fees)
  - leadership/involvement in the IPE program
Curriculum Sample: Assessment

**WCU**

1. APIE process overall in foundations course (200/soph fall)
2. Concepts intro (352/soph spring)
3. Content learned/skills practiced 4 RT lecture and lab courses (junior)
   1. 340/341- ID/DD
   2. 350/353- Phys dis
   3. 360/361- Older Adults
   4. 405/406- Psych
4. *Service learning labs are key clinical components for us*
5. *10 classes total*

**SRU**

- RCTH 120 Inclusive Leisure Services – 1
- RCTH 220 RT Services- 2
- RCTH 232 RT Phys Dis – 6
- RCTH 233 RT Mental Health – 5
- RCTH 314 Clinical Aspects RT – 10
- RCTH 317 – Organization & Management – 2
- RCTH 319 – Client Assessment in RT – 14
- RCTH 320 RT Program Design – 8
- RCTH 420 RT Older Adults – 6
- RCTH 422 RT Interventions I – 3
- RCTH 423 RT Interventions II – 5
- *11 classes total*
Improve the infrastructure for a graduated progression of quality fieldwork experiences.
Current NCTRC Fieldwork/Internship Requirement

• Completion of a internship experience in accordance with NCTRC Standards:

“A minimum 560-hour, 14 consecutive week internship experience in therapeutic recreation services that uses the therapeutic recreation process as defined by the current NCTRC Job Analysis Study under the supervision of both academic and agency internship supervisors who are NCTRC CTRS® certified.

The agency supervisor must also possess the CTRS® credential for one year prior to supervising an internship student. An acceptable internship experience is one which is completed after the majority of required therapeutic recreation and general recreation coursework is completed as verified on the official transcript”
The curriculum must provide clinical experiences, including clinical education/practicum and clinical internship/field placement, under the direct supervision of a qualified clinical instructor in an appropriate setting.

Students must have opportunities to practice and integrate the cognitive learning, with the associated psychomotor skills requirements of the profession, in accordance with professional standards of practice to develop entry-level clinical proficiency and professional behavior.

The clinical experiences should allow students opportunities to practice with different consumer populations and in different settings.
The clinical internship or field placement must meet the requirements of the national credentialing organization and state laws and regulations for certification, registration or licensure.

Competencies for practice as a recreational therapist must be a focus of development during the clinical internship or field placement experience.

In order to establish consistency in practice, competencies for practice as a recreational therapist and performance during the clinical internship must be assessed on the CARTE Clinical Performance Appraisal Summary Form.

It is also recommended that agencies utilize the "Competency Self-Assessment Detail Form" (ATRA, 2008, pp. 31-54) for student self-assessment of competencies following the internship/field placement experience.
CARTE Standards regarding Oversight of Clinical Experiences by Program Director

Must establish criteria for sites that provide clinical education experiences for students.

Required to evaluate on an annual and planned basis all clinical education sites where students are gaining clinical experience.

Responsible for making sure clinical instructor orientation and evaluation takes place.

Must ensure regularly planned communication between the program and the clinical instructor.
Key recommendations include the following:

1. Require all TR/RT curricula to show consistency in learning outcomes that reflect entry-level competencies in the field

2. Incorporate new and increasing levels of competencies into RT/TR curricula

3. Improve the infrastructure for a graduated progression of quality fieldwork experiences

CARTE Accreditation is a means for achieving them all.
ATRA believes that a single form of academic program accreditation is essential in ensuring consistent content and rigor among undergraduate recreational therapy programs.

One of ATRA’s Guiding Principles is our belief in “evidenced based practice, professional credentialing, and accreditation” (ATRA, 2015).

Additionally, one of the key findings from the ATRA Higher Education Task Force was to strengthen and standardize undergraduate recreational therapy curricula.
In support of our guiding principles, findings from the Higher Education Task Force, and in support of consistent RT educational experiences, ATRA sponsors the Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education (CARTE).

ATRA believes accreditation through CARTE is the best method for ensuring consistent content and rigor within undergraduate RT educational programs due to its sole focus on curriculum competencies related to recreational therapy.
Call to Action

• In light of the findings of the Higher Education Task Force and ATRA’s Position Statement on Academic Accreditation, we believe it is imperative that ALL academic programs in the profession (RT/TR):
  • Use CARTE Accreditation Standards as the basis for their curriculum
  • Work towards CARTE Accreditation for their RT/TR Program

• Doing so is the clearest path to quickly and efficiently improve the consistency and quality of recreational therapy education. This benefits us all.

Let’s move the profession forward!
Questions/Discussion