



February 21, 2023

## MEMO

### **Re: Position Statement on Entry to Practice Qualifications**

Since 1996 the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA) has been promoting the allyship of helping professionals across the country. In fact, this organization was incorporated with the mission of bringing people with different educational backgrounds, from different health-related work settings, together as a collective to resolve common issues. While we continue to promote the value of collaboration nationally and abroad, we also feel it is necessary to shed light on the current landscape of the Recreation Therapy profession.

There remains great variability in the qualifications of a recreation therapist and recreation therapy assistant across the country. In the healthcare arena, we share collegial spaces with several masters-level entries to practice professions and face the consequences of such in opportunities for career advancement and financial compensation. The lack of consistency in educational requirements continues to be a major barrier to the understanding and advancement of our profession. As provincial associations actively pursue regulation and governments focus on continued protection of the public, there is an imminent need for consistency and role clarification between the recreation therapist and assistant roles, with clear educational qualifications.

The following qualifications for Recreation Therapists are reflective of the standards endorsed by CTRA membership in 2009. With 86% of voting members in-favour of the CTRS<sup>®</sup> credential, the 2009 vote promoted a national standard for entry to practice serving under the title of Recreation Therapist in Canada. While this standard was documented more than a decade ago, CTRA would like to formally position this standard in honour of our provincial colleagues in their pursuit for provincial licensure and regulation.

The following qualifications are consistent with the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification<sup>®</sup> NCTRC<sup>®</sup> regarding the qualified provider of Recreation Therapy Services. As such, CTRA recommends that provincial associations and chapters of CTRA require the CTRS<sup>®</sup> credential for entry to practice as a Recreation Therapist, as it provides protection to the public and addresses the necessary components required to pursue regulation. Certification is attained through the NCTRC<sup>®</sup> by meeting the eligibility criteria, voluntarily writing the CTRS<sup>®</sup> entrance to practice examination, and maintaining continuing education and practice hours.

A Recreation Therapist:

- Completion of a baccalaureate degree or higher in Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy or as accepted by the NCTRC<sup>®</sup>.
- Hold the CTRS<sup>®</sup> credential, in good standing, with the NCTRC<sup>®</sup>.



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- Be a professional member, in good standing, with at least one Therapeutic Recreation Association.

A Recreation Therapy Assistant:

- Completion of a diploma in Recreation Therapy or Therapeutic Recreation.
- Professional members, in good standing, with at least one Therapeutic Recreation Association or a therapy assistant association preferred.

While it is our position that differentiation between these two roles is necessary for the advancement of the profession, we would like to emphasize the value of both positions. Finally, CTRA wishes to express gratitude for the contributions of all recreation therapy professionals that contribute to the continued growth of our profession. We are committed to supporting provinces in the adoption of this standard for future Recreation Therapists entering the field and invite inquiries to be directed to [executivedirector@canadian-tr.org](mailto:executivedirector@canadian-tr.org).

On Behalf of the Board of Directors,

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