



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation Policies and Procedures

Horticultural therapy certificate programs are college-credit instructional programs designed to provide a foundation in the theory and application of horticultural therapy for diverse populations. In accrediting these programs, AHTA assures that the program meets nationally-endorsed standards in the profession, and meets the horticultural therapy requirements for the AHTA's voluntary professional registration program. Certificate programs are required to meet the specific criteria as defined by AHTA in these policies and procedures.

I. Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program requirements:

Effective March 5, 2012, an organization and/or academic institution seeking and/or renewing AHTA accreditation must be an organizational member of AHTA.

- A. The horticultural therapy coursework taken from a certificate program must come from an AHTA accredited certificate program and be accompanied by a transcript from the credit granting institution.
- B. All programs are required to provide a minimum of nine (9) semester credits of coursework in horticultural therapy.
- C. All coursework must be taught by qualified instructors:
 - 1. All horticultural therapy specialization coursework must be taught by a registered horticultural therapist with a minimum of three (3) year's work experience.
 - 2. All horticultural therapy teachers must possess documentation of being an HTR in good standing.

II. Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Content

- A. Certificate program courses are required to cover the content areas as identified. The following topic titles do not represent actual course titles. A program may include additional topic areas.
 - 1. Overview of the profession to include:
 - a. Definition of horticultural therapy
 - b. History of horticultural therapy
 - c. Program types: Social, Therapeutic, Vocational
 - d. Introduction to AHTA
 - e. Brief overview of the professional registration process



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

2. Population characteristics and considerations, to include:
 - a. Senses and related impairments (e.g., vision, hearing)
 - b. Psychology and related impairments (e.g., mental health, behavior, addictions)
 - c. Cognitive and related impairments (e.g., brain injury, developmental, dementia)
 - d. Anatomy/physiology and related impairments (e.g., spinal cord, orthopedic, nervous system)

 3. Programming and techniques, to include:
 - a. Developing goals and objectives for horticultural therapy clients
 - b. Client assessment, evaluation and documentation tools
 - c. Horticultural activities (plants, gardening and related indoor/outdoor activities)
 - d. Adapting programming activities to meet diverse client goals
 - e. Plant materials for horticultural therapy programs
 - f. Adaptive tools and devices
 - g. Design of accessible indoor and outdoor horticultural therapy spaces (including site assessment, facilitation, installation, utilization and evaluation)
 - h. Therapeutic garden characteristics and universal design

 4. Program management, to include:
 - a. Developing short and long-term program plans
 - b. Preparing proposals for horticultural therapy programs
 - c. Developing a program budget
 - d. Working as part of a multi-disciplinary team member
 - e. Elements of fundraising
 - f. Marketing and publicizing your program
 - g. Soliciting and managing volunteers
 - h. Grant writing overview
 - i. Research overview
 - j. Professional consulting work
- B. Internships associated with certificate programs will not count toward the fulfillment of the required (nine) 9 semester credits of coursework. The internship will count toward the fulfillment of the internship requirement for professional registration.

III. Application and Review Process

A. Application requirements



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

1. An applicant must submit one (1) complete application packet to AHTA mailed via regular mail or electronically.
2. Applications must be typed.
3. Acceptable formats for application materials include PDF and Word documents. Clean copies of documents scanned in JPEG format and sent electronically are acceptable.

B. Complete application packet

- A completed application form (available on the AHTA website)
- A horticultural therapy certificate program proposal; please see section C for details
- Resumés of all horticultural therapy instructors and guest speakers (limit to 2 pages/instructor)
- For programs affiliated with a college or university issuing the college credit, a letter confirming the agreement
- Application fee of \$1,000.00
 - If sending application by mail, send check or money order, make payable to AHTA.
 - If sending application electronically, payment can be submitted at the time of application. Follow the instructions on the online application form for electronic payment.

C. Program proposal

- Overall program goals and objectives
- A description of each course to include course content, learning objectives, methods of presentation, and student assessment methods
- Course schedule (annually, bi-annually, other)

D. Review of applications

1. Applications are reviewed and evaluated by the AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation review board. The review board is composed of a minimum of four reviewers and a chairperson.
2. If all required materials are not submitted the application will be returned without action and a summary report noting the missing documentation will be sent to the applicant.



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

3. Program applications will be assessed within eight (8) weeks of submission and applicants will be notified both orally and in writing.
4. One copy of the program application will be kept on file by AHTA for five (5) years.

IV. Accreditation Appeals

- A. Applicants may appeal a decision of the AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation review board by filing a written appeal within 30 days of notification of the decision. Appeals should be mailed to AHTA and should state grounds for the appeal.
- B. Appeals will be considered by the AHTA Executive Committee serving as the Program Accreditation Board of Appeals. Applicants will be advised when an appeal review has been scheduled.
- C. Subsequent to the review by the Board of Appeals, a written report on the appeal will be provided to the certificate program director.

V. Maintaining Accreditation

- A. AHTA accredited certificate programs must reapply for AHTA accreditation every five (5) years. Programs are required to submit the AHTA Renewal application form (available on the AHTA website) and the application fee of \$1,000.00. Reference Section III above for complete application procedures and requirements.
- B. If there are any staff and/or course changes made prior to five (5) years, a program is required to submit the AHTA Notification of Change form (available on the AHTA website) along with the processing fee.
 1. Documentation should include a course description noting changes in content, credit hours, objectives and assessment tools, and/or a complete course description for each new course and/or a resumé for new instructors.
 2. There is a \$100 fee for processing program changes. Programs should submit documentation and fee to AHTA mailed via regular mail or electronically. Reference Section III above for instructions.
- C. Renewal applications and program changes will be reviewed by the AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation review board as described in Section III.

VI. Accreditation suspension:



American Horticultural Therapy Association.®

- A. Certificate programs are subject to suspension of accreditation status under the following circumstances:
 - 1. The certificate program instructor is not an HTR or an HTM.
 - 2. For certificate programs affiliated with a college/university issuing academic credit, the certificate program does not maintain, or becomes ineligible for, its affiliation.
- B. The certificate program is responsible for notifying the AHTA if any of the above circumstances occur. The AHTA will coordinate the terms of reinstatement with the certificate program.
- C. In the event the certificate program does not notify the AHTA about the above noted circumstances, and the AHTA is informed by a third party, AHTA accreditation of the certificate program will be withdrawn.

For more information, please contact the AHTA office at 888-294-8527 or email at info@ahita.org.