



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

AHTA Horticultural Therapy Course Accreditation Policies and Procedures

Horticultural therapy courses are college credit instructional courses designed to provide a foundation in the theory and application of horticultural therapy for diverse populations. In accrediting individual horticultural therapy courses, the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) assures that the course meets nationally-endorsed standards in the profession, and meets the horticultural therapy requirements for the AHTA's voluntary professional registration program. Individual horticultural therapy courses are required to include the specific course content as defined by the AHTA in these policies and procedures.

I. Horticultural Therapy Course requirements:

- A. All horticultural therapy courses must be for college credit.
- B. All horticultural therapy courses must be offered for either 3 semester or 4 quarter credits.
- C. All courses must be taught by qualified instructors:
 - 1. All horticultural therapy specialization courses must be taught by an educator qualified in their area of expertise.
 - 2. All horticultural therapy instructors are encouraged to pursue professional registration with the American Horticultural Therapy Association.
 - 3. All horticultural therapy courses that include an internship component must include supervision by a professionally registered horticultural therapist (HTR) approved by the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

II. Introduction to Horticultural Therapy Course Content

- A. Definition of horticultural therapy
- B. History of horticultural therapy
- C. Program types – horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture
- D. Introduction to the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA)
- E. AHTA Code of Ethics and AHTA Standards of Practice
- F. Brief overview of the professional registration process

G. Disability groups, characteristics and considerations, to include:

- Psychological (e.g., mental illness, substance use, attention deficit)
- Physical (e.g., spinal injury, orthopedic, cerebral palsy)
- Sensory (e.g., vision, hearing, sensory processing)
- Developmental (e.g., intellectual, autism, Down syndrome)
- Disease (e.g., cancer, dementia, stroke)

III. Horticultural Therapy Program Materials, Tools and Techniques

- A. Client assessment, evaluation, and documentation
- B. Goals and objectives for horticultural therapy clients
- C. Horticultural activities and activity modification
- D. Plant materials for horticultural therapy programs
- E. Adaptive tools, equipment, and devices
- F. Accessible indoor/outdoor horticultural therapy area (including consultation, site assessment, installation, utilization, and evaluation)
- G. Therapeutic garden characteristics and universal design

IV. Horticultural Therapy Program Management

- A. Short- and long-term program plans
- B. Horticultural therapy program proposals
- C. Program budgets
- D. Horticultural therapist role in multi-disciplinary team
- E. Volunteer resources and management
- F. Program promotion
- G. Funding resources, grants, and funding proposals
- H. Horticultural therapy research methods, evaluation, and outcomes

V. Application for Accreditation

A. Applicant requirements

1. The applicant must designate a single point of contact that will be responsible for the accreditation application.
2. An academic program seeking AHTA accreditation must be an organizational member of the AHTA.

B. Accreditation application requirements

1. An applicant must submit the on-line application for *AHTA Horticultural Therapy Course Accreditation*, course proposal, and supporting materials.
2. A processing fee of \$50.00. The processing fee is nonrefundable.

3. An accreditation fee of \$375 per course.

C. Course proposal includes:

- A description of the horticultural therapy course to include course content, learning objectives, methods of presentation, and student assessment methods
- Course schedule (annually, bi-annually, other)

D. Complete accreditation application includes:

- On-line application form (available on the AHTA website)
- A horticultural therapy course proposal
- Course Instructor information (a short CV or resume limited to 2 pages)
- Processing fee of \$50.00
- Accreditation fee of \$375.00 per course.

Note: Payment is due at time of application. Follow the instructions on the on-line application form for electronic payment.

VI. Renewing and Maintaining Accreditation

A. Course accreditation is granted for a five (5) year period and must be renewed every five (5) years to maintain accreditation with the AHTA.

B. The renewal applicant must designate a single point of contact that will be responsible for reapplying for accreditation.

C. An academic program seeking AHTA accreditation renewal must be an organizational member of the AHTA.

D. Renewal application requirements

1. Renewal applicants are required to submit the on-line application for *Renewal of AHTA Horticultural Therapy Course Accreditation*, course information, and supporting materials.
2. A renewal processing fee of \$50.00.
3. An accreditation fee of \$375 per course.

E. Course information includes:

- Course schedule (annually, bi-annually, other)
- A complete course description for each course

- Summary of any course changes to previously approved course content, credit hours, objectives and assessment tools

F. Complete course renewal application includes:

- On-line renewal application form (available on the AHTA website)
- Horticultural therapy course information
- Course Instructor information (a short CV or resume limited to 2 pages)
- Renewal processing fee and accreditation fee(s)

Note: Payment is due at time of application. Follow the instructions on the on-line application form for electronic payment.

VII. Review of Accreditation Applications and Renewals

- A. Accreditation applications and renewal 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Complete applications will be assessed within eight (8) weeks of submission and applicants will be notified both orally and in writing.
- D. One copy of the application will be kept on file by the AHTA for five (5) years.

VIII. 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 electronically to the AHTA and should state grounds for the appeal.
- B. Appeals will be considered by the AHTA Executive Committee serving as the 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 applicant.

IX. Accreditation Suspension:

- A. The academic program is subject to suspension of course accreditation status under the following circumstances:

1. The AHTA is informed by a third party that the academic program is providing material that is in direct conflict with the *AHTA Definitions and Positions* paper.
2. The AHTA is informed by a third party that the horticultural therapy program instructor is in violation of the AHTA Code of Ethics.

B. Process and Procedure:

1. The AHTA will give a formal written warning to the academic program that suspension of course accreditation is being considered. The academic program will be given an opportunity to respond and correct the identified situation.
2. The letter will summarize the situation and facts that led to the possible suspension as well as the requirements and timelines that must be met to prevent suspension.
3. The academic program will have ten (10) working days from receiving the notification letter to respond or to appeal the decision.
4. The AHTA Certificate Program Review Board Chair will coordinate the terms of the warning and/or suspension.

X. Accreditation Withdrawal:

A. The AHTA course accreditation will be withdrawn if:

1. The academic program does not meet the conditions of suspension; and
2. A suspension is not considered to be appropriate or adequate action.

B. Process and Procedure:

1. Any decision to withdraw course accreditation will be provided by a formal letter. The letter will outline the decision for withdrawal.
2. The academic program will be required to terminate the use of the AHTA accreditation language on all corresponding materials.
3. Notice of the withdrawal of AHTA accreditation will be posted on the AHTA website.
4. The academic program may appeal the Review Board's decision as described in section VI. Accreditation Appeals above.
5. In the event of accreditation withdrawal, the AHTA Certificate Program Review Board Chair will coordinate the terms of reinstatement with the academic program.

For more information, contact the AHTA office at 206-209-5296 or email at info@ahta.org.