

# Recreational Therapy MS

---

## COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Learn more about the Master of Science in Recreational Therapy.

## About the Program

The 36-credit online MS in Recreational Therapy is designed for individuals who want to advance their knowledge and skills related to evidence-based practice within healthcare and human services. The curriculum teaches from a conceptual model of health promotion and rehabilitation and maintains a lifespan perspective in three core areas: health, disability and leisure. The primary focus of academic and clinical preparation is on training recreational therapists to use play, recreation and leisure to achieve and maintain goals related to health promotion, rehabilitation and full participation in an active, meaningful life. Specialization coursework can be used to meet advanced certification.

The faculty utilize contemporary educational and learning technologies to impart the most current cutting-edge practitioner and leadership skills central to today's healthcare and human service provision. This is done while maintaining the timeless concepts of health, recreation and leisure as that is what drives the human spirit. The online MS in Recreational Therapy program is designed for those who strive to be leaders in recreational therapy and share a drive to improve the lives of others while harnessing the value inherent in, and benefits derived from, recreational activities.

**Time Limit for Degree Completion:** 4 years

**Campus Location:** Online, with a combination of asynchronous components (discussion boards and other assignments completed by students on their own time) and synchronous components (web conference-based live class discussions, chat rooms and video meetings)

**Full-Time/Part-Time Status:** The degree program can be completed on a full- or part-time basis.

**Interdisciplinary Study:** Interdisciplinary study is encouraged and may be geared toward the student's personal interests (e.g., counseling, exercise science, special education). The diversity of departments and programs in the College of Public Health presents abundant opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning. Additionally, part of the academic experience in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences involves inter-professional education.

**Affiliation(s):** Numerous healthcare and human service agencies in Philadelphia and the surrounding Delaware Valley region cooperate with the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and offer opportunities for student training and research. These include nationally recognized rehabilitation facilities such as Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, MossRehab, the Princeton Medical Center, Shriner's Hospital, the Temple University Hospital and Health System, and the Variety Club Camp and Developmental Center.

Additionally, graduate students are encouraged and supported to complete internships/clinical practicums in an extensive network of agencies cultivated by the program over the years. These include placements across the country, including California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Montana and Virginia.

**Ranking:** The faculty and the program are nationally recognized for excellence and have received numerous national and state awards for their contributions. Graduates of the program consistently perform well on the national credentialing examination for certified recreational therapists.

**Accreditation:** The academic program meets or exceeds all current curriculum standards issued by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) and other professional organizations.

**Areas of Specialization:** Faculty members specialize and offer learning opportunities in adapted sport and inclusive recreation, behavioral health, geriatrics, health promotion and rehabilitation, pediatrics, and physical rehabilitation.

**Job Prospects:** Graduates of the program are highly sought for advanced clinical/management positions in adult day programs, assisted living facilities, community settings providing specialized services to individuals with disabilities, hospitals, nursing homes and pediatric facilities. Graduates who use the degree to enter this field are also highly sought after to begin practicing as recreational therapists.

**Licensure/Certification:** A license is required to practice recreational therapy in the following states: New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Utah. The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) administers an examination that students must pass in order to become a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS). Graduates from Temple's Master of Science in Recreational Therapy program meet the educational eligibility requirements to sit for the NCTRC exam. For more information, visit <https://www.atra-online.com/page/CertandLicense>.

**Non-Matriculated Student Policy:** Students are allowed to take up to 9 credits of graduate coursework before matriculation. Selection of courses must be made in conjunction with the Graduate Program Director in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

**Financing Opportunities:** Limited funding opportunities are sometimes available in the form of teaching or research assistantships or externships:

- Assistants are expected to devote up to 20 hours per week to teaching or research obligations. Availability depends on courses offered or whether faculty have externally funded research grants. Assignments vary depending on the nature of the grant. Assistantships carry a stipend and partial or full tuition remission.
- Graduate Externs are hired by other divisions of the university, which make offers directly. For example, Campus Recreation hires externs to conduct student recreation events, and the Institute on Disabilities hires externs to assist with various projects. Externs do not receive tuition remission.

Applying for a position as a Teaching or Research Assistant or Graduate Extern is done online and involves outlining relevant qualifications and experience. Students are notified as opportunities become available.

## Admission Requirements and Deadlines

### Application Deadline:

*Fall:* March 1

*Spring:* November 1

All applicants to the MS in Recreational Therapy program must apply via the Centralized Application Service for Public Health (SOPHAS). The system can be accessed at <https://sophas.liaisoncas.com/>.

### Letters of Reference:

*Number Required:* 3

*From Whom:* One letter of recommendation should be written by a faculty member who can comment on your academic ability. The others can be from professional references who can speak to your work-related competencies.

**Coursework Required for Admission Consideration:** If admitted, students lacking NCTRC national credentialing are required to take leveling and supportive undergraduate courses, in addition to the MS degree requirements, prior to completion of 15 credits in the program.

**Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline:** A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution is required. All undergraduate majors are considered. A GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale is required, but applicants with a GPA below 3.0 may be considered for admission based on scores at or above the 65th percentile on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or Miller Analogy Test (MAT) or a GPA of 3.25 in 9 credits of graduate-level coursework.

**Statement of Goals:** Write an essay of approximately 1,000 words that responds to these questions:

- How have your recreation and leisure experiences contributed to your health and personal growth? Consider different areas of wellness and how these components have interacted and influenced each other in your life.
- What, if any, experience do you have in working with individuals with disabilities?
- What are your interests in and career goals related to recreational therapy?

Your essay is evaluated on the quality of your writing and synthesis of ideas, which are expected to be of a certain standard at the master's level. It benefits your application if you highlight relevant active volunteerism, work experience(s) that developed relevant skills, and/or past leadership experience. The essay allows the department to determine your fit with the program.

### Standardized Test Scores:

GRE/MAT: Optional, although applicants who believe GRE scores would complement their application are encouraged to submit scores to SOPHAS using code 0151.

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 79 (send officially to SOPHAS using the SOPHAS-specific TOEFL code 5688)
- IELTS Academic: 6.5
- PTE Academic: 53
- Duolingo: 110

**Resume:** Current professional resume required.

**Laptop:** Laptop: All incoming students in the College of Public Health are required to have a laptop. Academic programs in the college are technology intensive. They incorporate statistical and database analyses; utilize specialized tools for athletic training, kinesiology, and physical therapy; stream audio and video for communication sciences; facilitate online interactive counseling for social work; and foster clinical experiences and online assessments. The laptop requirement enables the College of Public Health to improve opportunities for active learning and provide greater access to specialized software and required tools in and out of the classroom, better preparing students for the workforce. Learn more about device specifications

and suggested vendors. Students can use excess financial aid (i.e., funds that are reimbursed after all tuition and fees are paid) to meet student needs, including the purchase of a laptop. Scholarships may also provide funding.

**Transfer Credit:** Graduate credits from an accredited institution are considered for transfer into the MS in Recreational Therapy degree program. Such courses are reviewed by the MS Program Director to determine whether they are equivalent to coursework offered at Temple and fulfill any degree requirements. The grade must be a "B" or better in order to transfer and have been earned within five years of applying to the program. The maximum number of credits that may be transferred into the MS program is 6.

**Clearances:** Students attending Temple University College of Public Health are required to submit to Temple University Student Health Services proof of immunizations and proof of immunity for MMR, Varicella and hepatitis B, proof of being fully vaccinated to COVID-19, TB screening, and a physical exam prior to matriculation. Annually, an influenza vaccine is required, some affiliates may also require annual TB screening and urine drug screenings. Students who are in fully on-line programs with no in person class or practicum experience can request a waiver for the above health requirements. Prematriculation Requirements | Student Health Services | Student Health Services (temple.edu)

All students who attend programs, which have a clinical / practicum / field education experience, will be required to purchase access to EXXAT - APPROVE compliance module. This module to order, store and maintain compliance documents, required for participation in a learning experience at an affiliate site.

Students who attend CPH programs which have a clinical / practicum / field education experience which are completed at affiliate sites both on and off the Temple University campus, are required to comply with minimum standard compliance metrics which include the above health requirements in addition to a national criminal background check, Act 33/34clearances in the state of Pennsylvania, FBI fingerprinting through DHS or DoE. FBI fingerprints is a national check, which can be performed through any of the 50 states.

The results of these requirements may limit and potentially eliminate placement options for the student, thus resulting in their inability to meet graduation requirements. Additionally, conviction of a misdemeanor, felony, or felonious or illegal act may prevent the individual from becoming credentialed and/or licensed to practice depending on the field of study.

In addition to the above, students attending the Master of Science in Recreational Therapy program are required to show proof of health insurance annually, and proof of current American Heart Association CPR certification for Healthcare Professionals.

## Program Requirements

### General Program Requirements:

*Number of Credits Required Beyond the Baccalaureate:*

- 36 for those who hold NCTRC national certification (see Course Sequence A).
- 36 plus 3 credits of Recreational Therapy-specific leveling coursework for those without NCTRC national certification (see Course Sequence B). Note that other supportive coursework may be required to sit for the national credentialing examination for therapeutic recreation specialist certification. Specialization electives can be used to meet advanced certification from NCTRC after one year of full-time employment as a recreational therapist.

*Required Courses:*

### Course Sequence A (for those with NCTRC national certification)

Code	Title	Credit Hours
HRPR 5001	Current and Emerging Issues in Public Health and Health Professions <sup>1</sup>	0
<b>A1: Required Core Graduate Courses</b>		
RCTH 5001	Graduate Research I in Recreational Therapy <sup>2</sup>	3
RCTH 5102	Recreational Therapy: Now and Then <sup>2</sup>	3
RCTH 5301	Evidence Based Practice in Recreational Therapy I <sup>2</sup>	3
RCTH 5302	Evidence Based Practice in Recreational Therapy II <sup>3</sup>	3
RCTH 5311	Conceptual and Contemporary Issues in Recreational Therapy <sup>3</sup>	3
RCTH 5312	Leisure, Health, and Recreational Therapy Interventions <sup>3</sup>	3
RCTH 5402	Recreational Therapy Administration and Management <sup>3</sup>	3
RCTH 5442	Program Planning and Practice in Recreational Therapy <sup>2</sup>	3
<b>A2: Electives</b>		
Select four of the following based on interests/needs:		12
HRPR 8985	Teaching in Higher Education: Health Professions	
RCTH 5009	Entrepreneurship in the Health Professions <sup>4</sup>	
RCTH 5204	Recreational Therapy and Assistive Technology <sup>5</sup>	

RCTH 5205	Recreational Therapy in Geriatric Services <sup>4</sup>
RCTH 5212	Play and Pediatric Development <sup>4</sup>
RCTH 5214	Child Life Interventions <sup>5</sup>
RCTH 5250	Special Topics in Recreational Therapy
RCTH 5314	Leisure-time Physical Activity and Community Engagement in Recreational Therapy
RCTH 5315	Social Engagement and Community Participation in Recreational Therapy <sup>5</sup>
RCTH 5382	Independent Study

**Total Credit Hours****36**

<sup>1</sup> This core course is required of all graduate students in the College of Public Health. It is available completely online and designed such that students can complete the modules at their own pace over the course of their degree program.

<sup>2</sup> This course is offered in the Fall semester.

<sup>3</sup> This course is offered in the Spring semester.

<sup>4</sup> This course is offered every other Fall semester.

<sup>5</sup> This course is offered every other Spring semester.

**Course Sequence B (for those without NCTRC national certification)**

Code	Title	Credit Hours
HRPR 5001	Current and Emerging Issues in Public Health and Health Professions <sup>1</sup>	0
<b>B1: Required Leveling/Supportive Undergraduate Courses<sup>2</sup></b>		
KINS 1221	Principles of Anatomy and Physiology I	3
PSY 2201	Foundations of Psychopathology	3
PSY 2301	Foundations of Developmental Psychology	3
RCTH 3096	Assessment and Documentation in Recreational Therapy	3
Additional credits in the content areas of social sciences and humanities.		9

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>B2: Required Core Graduate Courses</b>		
RCTH 5001	Graduate Research I in Recreational Therapy <sup>4</sup>	3
RCTH 5102	Recreational Therapy: Now and Then <sup>4</sup>	3
RCTH 5301	Evidence Based Practice in Recreational Therapy I <sup>4</sup>	3
RCTH 5302	Evidence Based Practice in Recreational Therapy II <sup>5</sup>	3
RCTH 5311	Conceptual and Contemporary Issues in Recreational Therapy <sup>5</sup>	3
RCTH 5312	Leisure, Health, and Recreational Therapy Interventions <sup>5</sup>	3
RCTH 5402	Recreational Therapy Administration and Management <sup>5</sup>	3
RCTH 5442	Program Planning and Practice in Recreational Therapy <sup>4</sup>	3
RCTH 5787	Recreational Therapy Practicum <sup>3</sup>	3

**B3: Electives**

Select three of the following based on interests/needs:		9
RCTH 5009	Entrepreneurship in the Health Professions <sup>6</sup>	
RCTH 5204	Recreational Therapy and Assistive Technology <sup>7</sup>	
RCTH 5205	Recreational Therapy in Geriatric Services <sup>6</sup>	
RCTH 5212	Play and Pediatric Development <sup>6</sup>	
RCTH 5214	Child Life Interventions <sup>7</sup>	
RCTH 5250	Special Topics in Recreational Therapy	
RCTH 5261	Disability Seminar on Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions <sup>4</sup>	
RCTH 5271	Disability Seminar on Physical and Neurological Health Conditions <sup>5</sup>	
RCTH 5314	Leisure-time Physical Activity and Community Engagement in Recreational Therapy	
RCTH 5315	Social Engagement and Community Participation in Recreational Therapy <sup>7</sup>	
RCTH 5382	Independent Study	

**Total Credit Hours****36**

- 1 This core course is required of all graduate students in the College of Public Health. It is available completely online and designed such that students can complete the modules at their own pace over the course of their degree program.
- 2 Depending on one's undergraduate major, some requirements may have already been completed. These credits do not count toward the MS credit totals, but are needed in order to be eligible to sit for the NCTRC certification exam (see <https://www.nctrc.org/>). The MS Program Coordinator reviews official transcript(s) and identifies any coursework needed. Any uncompleted requirements may be taken at an institution other than Temple University, with approval of the MS Program Coordinator. All required leveling/supportive undergraduate coursework must be completed by the time the student has accrued 15 credits in the MS program at Temple University.
- 3 RCTH 5787 Recreational Therapy Practicum is a 560-hour field placement experience under the supervision of a full-time Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) at an approved agency site. The student works with a faculty advisor in the selection of a site for this experience. RCTH 5787 is designed to meet NCTRC internship requirements for eligibility to sit for the NCTRC certification exam.
- 4 This course is offered in the Fall semester.
- 5 This course is offered in the Spring semester.
- 6 This course is offered every other Fall semester.
- 7 This course is offered every other Spring semester.

**Minimum Grade to be Earned for All Required Courses:** B-

**Culminating Event:** Successful completion of coursework constitutes the culminating event for the MS in Recreational Therapy.

## Accelerated Programs

Undergraduate students may opt to pursue an accelerated +1 program, enabling them to complete both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in less time than the traditional route.

The accelerated pathway for the Recreational Therapy MS is available to students pursuing the Recreational Therapy BS.

**Cohort Code:** XMSRECTHER

**Minimum Cumulative GPA:** 3.00 overall; 3.50 in Recreational Therapy coursework

## Graduate Courses Approved to Count for Both Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees

Code	Title	Credit Hours
RCTH 5001	Graduate Research I in Recreational Therapy (or equivalent)	3
RCTH 5402	Recreational Therapy Administration and Management	3
Select two of the following:		6
RCTH 5009	Entrepreneurship in the Health Professions	
RCTH 5204	Recreational Therapy and Assistive Technology	
RCTH 5205	Recreational Therapy in Geriatric Services	
RCTH 5212	Play and Pediatric Development	
RCTH 5214	Child Life Interventions	
RCTH 5250	Special Topics in Recreational Therapy	
RCTH 5261	Disability Seminar on Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions	
RCTH 5271	Disability Seminar on Physical and Neurological Health Conditions	
RCTH 5314	Leisure-time Physical Activity and Community Engagement in Recreational Therapy	
RCTH 5315	Social Engagement and Community Participation in Recreational Therapy	
RCTH 5316	Measuring Health and Disability: The ICF Model	
RCTH 5382	Independent Study	

## Suggested Academic Plan

Course	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Year 3</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Submit application to +1 program		
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>0</b>

**Spring**

One RCTH 5000+ elective from list <sup>1</sup>	3
--	---

<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>3</b>
---------------------	----------

**Year 4****Fall**

RCTH 5001	Graduate Research I in Recreational Therapy <sup>2</sup>	3
-----------	--	---

One RCTH 5000+ elective from list <sup>1</sup>	3
--	---

<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>6</b>
---------------------	----------

**Spring**

RCTH 5402	Recreational Therapy Administration and Management <sup>3</sup>	3
-----------	---	---

<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>3</b>
---------------------	----------

<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>12</b>
---------------------------	-----------

<sup>1</sup> One RCTH 5000+ elective fulfills a RCTH elective in the Recreational Therapy BS.

<sup>2</sup> RCTH 5001 fulfills the requirement of RCTH 4102 for the Recreational Therapy BS.

<sup>3</sup> RCTH 5402 fulfills the requirement of RCTH 4111 in the Recreational Therapy BS.

**Admissions Criteria**

Candidates for the +1 program must:

- maintain a 3.00 undergraduate cumulative GPA and a 3.50 GPA in Recreational Therapy coursework.
- maintain full-time undergraduate status (12-18 credits per semester).
- earn a B or higher in each graduate course.
- successfully complete RCTH 4185.
- graduate with the baccalaureate degree within two (2) years and apply to the Graduate School.

**Application:** [https://chpswtemple.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0erTnsu4ScDFLuK](https://chpswtemple.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0erTnsu4ScDFLuK)

**Contact Information**

Gena Bell Vargas, CTRS Graduate Program Director, Associate Professor of Instruction  
 gena.vargas@temple.edu  
 215-204-7010

Learn more about the Recreational Therapy accelerated program.

**Contacts****Program Web Address:**

<https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/recreational-therapy-ms-hp-rlth-ms>

**Department Information:**

Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
 Recreational Therapy Program  
 1700 N. Broad Street, Suite 304  
 Philadelphia, PA 19121-3429  
 gena.vargas@temple.edu  
 215-204-7010

**Submission Address for Application Materials:**

<https://sophas.liaisoncas.com/>

**Department Contacts:**

*Admissions:*  
 CPH Office of Admissions  
 cph@temple.edu  
 215-204-5200

*Graduate Program Coordinator:*  
Gena Bell Vargas, PhD, CTRS  
gena.vargas@temple.edu  
215-204-7010