



# American Horticultural Therapy Association®

## AHTA Professional Registration Policies and Procedures

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes and registers horticultural therapists through a voluntary professional registration program. The designation Horticultural Therapist-Registered, HTR, ensures professional competencies have been achieved based on standardized academic requirements and professional training.

Applications for Professional Registration are accepted for review when all requirements for Registration have been completed and upon receipt of a complete application packet.

### I. Professional Registration

#### A. Eligibility for Professional Registration

To be eligible for professional registration, an applicant is required to:

1. Be a member of AHTA at the Associate level.
2. Have a baccalaureate degree in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy or an equivalent degree as defined in [Section III](#).
3. Complete all coursework requirements in plant science, human science, and horticultural therapy. Horticultural therapy coursework taken through a certificate program must be from an AHTA accredited program. Applicants with advanced degrees in a horticulture or human science field must meet the requirements defined in [Section II](#) and [Section III](#).
4. Have successfully completed the required 480-hour internship in horticultural therapy or meet the work experience criteria defined in [Section II](#).

#### B. Application Requirements and Submission Process

Application for professional registration is a combination of electronic and/or manual submission of materials. Acceptable documents include a clean copy scanned in JPEG format or PDF document. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the process and verify that all materials have been received.

1. Application requirements:
  - a. A completed *Professional Registration Application*.

b. Internship materials:

- 1) Horticultural therapy internship: a completed *Internship Performance Report* and a copy of either a) the Internship Case Study or b) Long-term Project.

OR

- 2) Internship work-experience option: a letter verifying dates and hours of employment signed by the registered horticultural therapist supervisor.

c. **Official** transcripts are required for all coursework. Unofficial transcripts, or unsealed transcripts, **will not be accepted**.

d. Application fee of \$150.00. The application fee is nonrefundable.

**Note:** The Internship Record of Hours and the Internship Goals and Objectives documents are not required. Additional materials are not required and will not be reviewed. Do not submit additional materials (i.e. emails, letters of reference, 3-ring notebooks, books, business documents, etc.).

2. Application process:

a. Application. Two options:

- 1) Online: Complete the online *Professional Registration Application* available on the AHTA website, Professional Registration section.
- 2) PDF: Download and complete the *Professional Registration Application* available on the AHTA website, Professional Registration section. Email or mail a copy to AHTA as noted in Section I.G.

b. Internship or Work Experience materials. Two options:

- 1) Online: Upload your *Internship Performance Report and/or supporting materials, or verification of work-experience letter* with the online *Professional Registration Application*.
- 2) Copy: Email your *Internship Performance Report and/or supporting materials, or verification of work-experience letter* as a PDF or mail a copy to AHTA as noted in Section I.G.

c. Transcripts: Three options:

- 1) Official transcripts may be forwarded directly to AHTA from the educational institution.

- 2) Official transcripts may be sent to the applicant and mailed by the applicant to AHTA as noted in Section I.G.
- 3) Official transcripts may be sent as electronic transcripts directly to AHTA from the granting school.

**Note:** Upon submission of application, please inform the AHTA Office if transcripts will be received from the educational institution and how many transcripts will be received.

d. Application Fee: Three options:

- 1) Submit the application fee at the end of the online application process.
- 2) Submit the application fee online if using the PDF option.
- 3) Mail a check or money order to AHTA. If you are sending in your application fee separate from application materials, please inform the AHTA Office at same time you notify the Office about transcripts. Mailing information is in Section I.G.

### C. Application Review

Applications are reviewed and evaluated by the AHTA Professional Registration Review Board. The Review Board is composed of six reviewers.

1. Applications are reviewed based on the academic and internship requirements.
2. If there are any questions regarding the submitted coursework in the required subject areas, the applicant will be asked to provide the syllabus. The application will be held and **will not be** processed until this information is received.
3. An incomplete application **will not be** processed. The AHTA Office will notify the applicant by email of the missing documentation. At that time, the applicant may submit the missing material or the application will be returned.
4. Applications will be assessed within eight (8) weeks of submission. The AHTA Office will notify the applicant by letter of the Review Board's decision and include a copy of the *AHTA Professional Registration Review Board Summary Sheet*.
5. Applicants approved for professional registration are conferred the credential HTR, Horticultural Therapist – Registered, and will receive a *Certificate of Professional Registration*.
6. One (1) copy of the application will be kept on file by AHTA for five (5) years. The AHTA Office maintains a record of the year the applicant was awarded or denied professional registration but does not keep an applicant's file after five (5) years.

Applicants should keep a copy of their original application and supporting materials for their records.

#### **D. Reapplication Requirements**

Applicants that have been denied registration because they did not meet the standards have one (1) year from the date of notification to attain those standards and reapply.

1. The AHTA Office will keep the original application on file. Individuals who reapply need only submit an addendum to their original application.
2. Download and complete the *Addendum to Professional Registration Application* available on the AHTA website, and either email or mail a copy to AHTA as noted in Section I.G.
3. Transcripts, *Internship Performance Report*, or additional information identified on the *Summary Sheet* should be submitted by methods described above in Section I.B at the same time as submitting the *Addendum*.
4. The Review Board Chair has the authority to accept or reject the reapplication based on prior recommendations of the Review Board. The AHTA Office will notify the applicant by letter of the Review Board's decision and include a copy of the *Summary Form*.
5. Applicants approved for professional registration are conferred the credential HTR, Horticultural Therapist – Registered, and will receive a *Certificate of Professional Registration*.
6. The reapplication fee for this service is \$35.00. Process payment by one of the methods described above in Section I.B.

#### **E. Professional Registration Appeals**

Applicants may appeal a decision of the Review Board within thirty (30) days of notification of their decision.

1. The AHTA Executive Committee serves as the Registration Appeals Board.
2. Appeals must be in writing and mailed to AHTA Office. Appeals should state the reason for appeal and state pertinent information. Mailing information is in Section I.G.
3. Applicants filing an appeal will be advised when an appeal review has been scheduled. Should the Appeals Board decide that there are grounds for an appeal, the application will be submitted to the Review Board for reconsideration.

4. Any decision made by the Review Board at that time will stand. The AHTA Office will notify the appellant by letter of the Review Board’s decision and include a copy of the *Summary Form*.

**F. Maintaining Professional Registration**

Applicants granted professional registration **are required to renew annually** at the **Professional** level and must maintain their membership in good standing in order to use the professional designation HTR.

1. The professionally registered member is responsible for maintaining their membership.
2. After three (3) months of a lapsed membership, a registrant must pay a reinstatement fee in addition to their annual membership dues to be reinstated.
3. The reinstatement fee for this service is \$75.00.
  - Contact the AHTA Office to request an invoice to renew your membership and reinstate your professional registration.
  - You may mail a check or money order made payable to AHTA along with your membership renewal form. Mailing information is in Section I.G.
4. After two (2) years of a lapsed membership, a registrant **will be** required to reapply for registration status.

**G. Professional Registration Fees and AHTA Contact Information**

1. Payment may be a check or money order made payable to AHTA. Fees are due and payable to AHTA upon application. Registration fees are nonrefundable.
  - Registration Application Fee..... \$150.00
  - Reapplication fee (within in 1 year)..... \$ 35.00
  - Reinstatement fee (after 3 months)..... \$ 75.00

2. Mailing address: AHTA Headquarters  
2150 N 107th St, Ste 205  
Seattle, WA 98133

Mail **transcripts and/or fees** attention to: Professional Registration.

Mail **registration appeals** attention to: Professional Registration Appeals Board.

3. Email all professional registration correspondence to Stacey Williams, AHTA Association Director, [info@ahta.org](mailto:info@ahta.org).

## II. Professional Registration Education Requirements

### A. Academic Requirements

1. A baccalaureate degree is the baseline requirement for professional registration. There are two options to meet this requirement:

Option A: A baccalaureate degree in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy.

Option B: An equivalent baccalaureate degree.

2. **Effective June 1, 2020:** An advanced degree in a horticulture or human science field may be considered in fulfillment of the undergraduate requirements for professional registration.

Option C: An applicant with a masters or doctoral degree in an approved plant science or human science field.

- Approved plant science: Horticulture, Horticultural Science, Plant Physiology, Plant Science, Floriculture
- Approved human science: Therapeutic Recreation, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, Counseling, Psychology, Rehabilitation Counseling

3. All coursework must have a passing grade of C minus (C-) or above or a pass for a pass/fail course.

### B. Internship Requirement

1. All applicants must successfully complete the required 480-hour internship or to be exempt from the internship, meet the work experience criteria.
2. AHTA Internship. Refer to the *AHTA Horticultural Therapy Internship Handbook* available on the AHTA website for internship requirements and complete information.
3. **Effective June 1, 2020:** Work experience option. An applicant may be exempt from the horticultural therapy internship requirement under the following criteria:

Option D: The applicant has a) the equivalent of 2,000 hours work experience not to exceed a 2-year period, b) the work experience is in a horticultural therapy program **directly** supervised by a registered horticultural therapist, and c) the applicant and supervisor **must** be employees of the same organization.

A letter verifying dates and hours of employment must be provided and signed by the registered horticultural therapist supervisor.

### **III. Professional Registration Options**

#### **A. Option A. A baccalaureate degree in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy.**

1. A degree in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy is defined as a horticulture degree that includes the required nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy coursework and the required twelve (12) credits in human science coursework, as identified in Section IV.
2. If the degree program does not offer specific horticultural therapy courses, the nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy may be achieved through:
  - a. AHTA Accredited Certificate Program. The horticultural therapy coursework completed through an accredited certificate program, if permitted by the academic institution, may be transferable credit to meet the degree requirements. The transferable credits must be documented on the official transcript.
  - b. Independent Study. A college credit course titled Independent Study may be considered a substitute for, or an equivalent to, an AHTA required horticultural therapy course. The independent study must be academic coursework reflective of the required course content in horticultural therapy, as identified in Section IV, and may not be hands-on or work experience.
3. Applicants applying under Option A are required to meet the internship or work-experience requirement.

#### **B. Option B: An equivalent baccalaureate degree**

1. An equivalent baccalaureate degree is defined as a degree in a field other than horticulture that includes the full 33 semester credits of specific required coursework as defined in Section IV.
2. The required coursework may be in fulfillment of a degree or may be completed in addition to an existing degree.
3. All coursework must be for college credit and documented through college transcripts.
4. All horticultural therapy coursework taken through a certificate program must be from an AHTA accredited program.

5. Applicants applying under Option B are required to meet the internship or work-experience requirement.

**C. Effective June 1, 2020: Option C: An applicant with a masters or doctoral degree in an approved plant science or human science field.**

1. An applicant with a masters or doctoral degree in an approved plant science or human science field is exempt from the undergraduate AHTA coursework requirements in their major. See Section II.A for approved degree programs.
2. An applicant is required to complete the three (3) core courses plus one elective course identified in Section IV, a total of twelve (12) semester credits of undergraduate coursework in a) human science if the advanced degree is in plant science or b) plant science if the advanced degree is in human science.
3. All applicants applying under Option C must have the nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy coursework.
4. Applicants applying under Option C are required to meet the internship or work-experience requirement.

#### **IV. Academic Coursework**

1. Coursework may be a combination of semester and quarter credits. All coursework completed as quarter credits must equal the required semester credits in each subject area.
2. A course taken for less than three (3) semester credits in a subject area may be combined with another course in the same subject area to equal the minimum requirement of three (3) semester credits required in the subject area.
3. **Required coursework:** The following coursework represents **subject areas** and not specific course titles:

- a) Plant Science: Twelve (12) semester credits total in:

Three core required courses - a minimum of three (3) semester credits in **each** individual subject area:

- Introduction to horticulture
- Plant propagation
- Pest and disease plant management



One elective course - a minimum of three (3) semester credits in **one** individual subject area:

- General plant pathology
- Greenhouse production/management
- Nursery production/management
- Landscape design
- Plant materials
- Soils

b) Human Science: Twelve (12) semester credits total in:

Three core required courses - a minimum of three (3) semester credits in **each** individual subject area:

- General psychology
- Abnormal psychology
- Human lifespan development

One elective course - a minimum of three (3) semester credits in **one** individual subject area:

- Counseling theories
- Aspects of disabilities and illnesses
- Group dynamics
- Principles of therapy
- Human anatomy/physiology
- Adult development and aging

c) Horticultural Therapy: Nine (9) semester credits total in:

- Horticultural therapy overview, introduction, or fundamentals
- Horticultural therapy program management
- Horticultural therapy skills, techniques, or practice
- Horticultural therapy methods and programming
- Human issues in horticultural therapy, people-plant relationships

Note: The AHTA Professional Registration Review Board does not preapprove courses. The *Course Titles that Support the AHTA Core Curriculum Topic Areas* document available on the AHTA website provides applicants with descriptions of approved course content to enable applicants to make an informed choice when selecting courses to meet the AHTA requirements.

4. **Horticultural Therapy Course Content:** Horticultural therapy coursework completed as an independent study is required to cover the content areas as defined. The following **subject areas** do not represent actual course titles. A course 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 – horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture
    - d. Introduction to the American Horticultural Association
    - e. AHTA Code of Ethics and AHTA Standards of Practice
    - f. Brief overview of the professional registration process
  2. Disability groups, characteristics and considerations, to include:
    - a. Psychological (e.g., mental illness, substance use, attention deficit)
    - b. Physical (e.g., spinal injury, orthopedic, cerebral palsy)
    - c. Sensory (e.g., vision, hearing, sensory processing )
    - d. Developmental (e.g., intellectual, autism, Down syndrome)
    - e. Disease (e.g., cancer, dementia, stroke )
  3. Program materials, tools, and techniques, to include:
    - 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
  4. Program management, to include:
    - 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

The AHTA website lists colleges and universities that offer horticultural therapy as a degree option and lists AHTA accredited horticultural therapy certificate programs.