



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, the American Horticultural Therapy Association (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:

- A. All horticultural therapy coursework must be for college credit.
- 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 instructors must possess documentation of current professional registration with the American Horticultural Therapy Association.
- D. An organization and/or academic institution seeking and/or renewing AHTA accreditation must be an organizational member of AHTA.

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 – 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

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 for Accreditation

A. Accreditation application requirements

1. An applicant must submit the on-line application for *AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation*, program proposal, and supporting materials.
2. An application fee of \$1,000.00.

B. Program proposal includes:

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

C. Complete accreditation application includes:

- On-line application form (available on the AHTA website)
- A horticultural therapy certificate program proposal
- Resumes for all professionally registered horticultural therapy instructors (limit 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 fee by mail, send check or money order made payable to AHTA.
 - If submitting application fee electronically, payment is due at time of application. Follow the instructions on the on-line application form for electronic payment.

IV. Renewing and Maintaining Accreditation

A. AHTA accredited certificate programs must reapply for AHTA accreditation every five (5) years to maintain accreditation with AHTA.

B. Program renewal application requirements

1. AHTA accredited certificate programs are required to submit the on-line application for *Renewal of AHTA Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program Accreditation*, program information, and supporting materials.
2. A renewal application fee of \$1,000.00.

C. Program information includes:

- A description of each horticultural therapy course to include course content, learning objectives, methods of presentation, and student assessment methods
- Course schedule (annually, bi-annually, other)
- Summary of any course changes to previously approved course content

D. Complete program renewal application includes:

- On-line renewal application form (available on the AHTA website)
- Horticultural therapy certificate program information
- Resumes of all professionally registered horticultural therapy instructors (limit 2 pages/instructor)
- For programs affiliated with a college or university issuing the college credit, a letter confirming the agreement
- Renewal application fee of \$1,000.00
 - If sending application fee by mail, send check or money order, made payable to AHTA. Application will not be processed until payment is received.

- If submitting application fee electronically, payment is due at time of application. Follow the instructions on the on-line application form for electronic payment.

E. Certificate Program Changes

1. AHTA accredited certificate programs are required to notify AHTA of any staff and/or course changes made prior to five (5) year renewal period to maintain accreditation with AHTA.
2. Notification of program change requirements:
 - a. AHTA accredited certificate programs are required to submit the *AHTA Notification of Program Change* form (available on the AHTA website), documentation of program changes, and supporting materials.
 - b. Processing fee \$100.00.
3. Documentation of program change(s) includes:
 - 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 description of instructor changes
4. Complete notification packet includes:
 - On-line form (available on the AHTA website)
 - Description of horticultural therapy certificate program changes
 - If applicable, resumes of all professionally registered horticultural therapy instructors (limit 2 pages/instructor)
 - Processing fee of \$100.00
 - If sending application fee by mail, send check or money order, made payable to AHTA. Notification will not be processed until payment is received.
 - If submitting application fee electronically, payment is due at time of application. Follow the instructions on the on-line application form for electronic payment.

V. Review of Accreditation Applications, Program Renewals, and Program Changes

- A. Accreditation applications, renewal applications, and program changes 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 program 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 program application will be kept on file by AHTA for five (5) years.

VI. 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.

VII. Accreditation Suspension:

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, contact the AHTA office at 888-294-8527 or email at info@ahta.org.