



American Horticultural Therapy Association®

AHTA Professional Registration Policies and Procedures Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner

The American Horticultural Therapy Association awards the designation Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, THP, through a voluntary registration program. The designation THP ensures professional competencies have been achieved based on standardized academic requirements and professional experience.

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

I. Professional Registration Information and Application Process

A. Registration Level:

Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner (THP). This level is intended for individuals who have an education in horticultural therapy and provide therapeutic horticulture services. Individuals at this registration level may advance to Horticultural Therapist-Registered upon completion of additional requirements.

B. Eligibility for Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner Professional Registration

1. To be eligible for professional registration, an applicant is required to be a member of AHTA as an Associate level One (1) or as an Associate Level Two (2)-year 3.
2. Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner requirements:
 - a. Completed all coursework requirements in horticultural therapy as defined Section III and IV.
 - b. Horticultural therapy coursework taken through a certificate program must be from an AHTA accredited program.
 - c. Have a minimum of 500 hours of documented delivery of therapeutic horticulture services as defined in Section II.

C. Eligibility for Reclassification to Registered Horticultural Therapist (HTR)

NOTE: An individual may apply the 500 hours of experience in therapeutic horticulture toward the 1500 hours work experience option in fulfillment of the internship requirement for the HTR, Registered Horticultural Therapist.

1. To be eligible for reclassification, an applicant is required to be a member of AHTA as a Professional Member, Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner level.
2. To be eligible for reclassification, an applicant must meet the **academic, internship, or work experience requirements as defined** in the *AHTA Professional Registration Policy and Procedures for Horticultural Therapist-Registered*.
3. Reclassification to Horticultural Therapist-Registered (HTR) requirements:
 - a. A baccalaureate degree in horticulture with a concentration in horticultural therapy **OR**
 - b. A baccalaureate degree and the coursework requirements in plant science and human science.

In addition, an applicant for reclassification must have either:

- c. Acquired an additional 1,000 hours of work experience **OR**
- d. Completed a 480-hour horticultural therapy internship.

D. Application Requirements, Materials, and Submission Process

Application for professional registration is a combination of electronic and/or manual submission of materials. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the process and verify that all materials have been received.

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

1. Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner application requirements and materials:
 - a. A completed *Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner Application*.
 - b. Official transcripts documenting all completed horticultural therapy coursework.

- c. A completed *Verification of Work Experience-Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner* form signed by either an employer, supervisor, or volunteer coordinator. If combining hours from more than one site with different supervisors, complete one form per site.

Note: An independent contractor must provide proof of services rendered to include dates and hours (i.e., signed contract, paid invoices, written agreement).
 - d. Application fee of \$100.00. The application fee is nonrefundable.
2. Reclassification to Horticultural Therapist-Registered application requirements and materials:
- a. A completed *Application for Reclassification* to Horticultural Therapist-Registered.
 - b. Official transcripts documenting a baccalaureate degree and all completed coursework in plant science and human science.
 - c. As described above, documentation of either:
 - 1) A completed *Verification of Work Experience-Horticultural Therapist-Registered* form documenting 1,000 hours of work experience **OR**
 - 2) Documentation in support of a completed 480-hour horticultural therapy internship.
 - d. Application fee of \$125.00. The application fee is nonrefundable.
3. Submission process for **both** the Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner and Reclassification to Horticultural Therapy-Registered:
- a. Complete the online *Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner* application **OR** the *Application for Reclassification* to Horticultural Therapist-Registered.
 - b. Work Experience or Internship materials:
 - 1) Acceptable documents include a clean copy scanned in JPEG format or PDF document.
 - 2) Upload materials online at the time of application or send by email as an attachment to the AHTA Office.

c. Transcripts: Three options:

- 1) Official transcripts may be mailed 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.I.
- 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: Two options:

- 1) Submit the application fee at the end of the online application process.
- 2) Select the “Invoice Me” option at the end of the online application process. Upon receipt of the AHTA Invoice, return payment along with the invoice to the AHTA Office. Mailing information is in Section I.I.

Note: An application will not be processed until payment is received.

E. 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 academic and work experience requirements. For reclassification, this may include the internship requirements or work experience requirements.
2. If there are any questions regarding the submitted application and/or materials, the review board may request additional information. 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 six (6) weeks of submission. The AHTA Office will notify the applicant electronically of the Review Board’s decision. The applicant will receive a confirmation letter and a copy of the *AHTA Professional Registration Review Board Summary Sheet*.

5. Applicants approved for professional registration are conferred the credential THP, Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, or reclassified and conferred the credential HTR, Horticultural Therapist – Registered. A *Certificate of Professional Registration* with the American Horticultural Therapy Association will be issued.
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.

F. 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. Complete the online *Addendum to Professional Registration Application* available on the AHTA website.
3. Additional information identified on the *Summary Sheet* should be submitted by methods described above in Section I.D 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 THP, Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, or reclassified and conferred the HTR, Horticultural Therapist – Registered. A *Certificate of Professional Registration* with the American Horticultural Therapy Association will be issued.
6. The reapplication fee for this service is:

Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner - \$25.00
Horticultural Therapist-Registered - \$35.00

Process payment by one of the methods described above in Section I.D.

G. 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 emailed to AHTA Office. Appeals should state the reason for appeal and state pertinent information.
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 Registration Appeals Board at that time will stand. The AHTA Office will notify the appellant by letter of the Appeal's Board's decision and include a copy of the *Summary Form*.

H. Maintaining Professional Registration

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

Note: Applicants granted professional registration as Horticultural Therapist-Registered under the reclassification option will adhere to the requirements identified in the *AHTA Professional Registration Policy and Procedures for Horticultural Therapist-Registered*.

1. The professionally registered member is responsible for maintaining their membership.
2. After three (3) months of lapsed membership, a registrant must pay a reinstatement fee in addition to their annual membership dues to be reinstated.
 - a) The reinstatement fee for Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner is - \$50.00
 - b) Contact the AHTA Office to request an invoice to renew your membership and reinstate your professional registration.
3. After two (2) years of a lapsed membership, a registrant **will be** required to reapply for registration status.

I. Professional Registration Fees and AHTA Contact Information

1. Fees are due and payable to AHTA upon application. Registration fees are nonrefundable.

2. Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner:

- Registration Application Fee..... \$100.00
- Reapplication fee (within in 1 year) \$25.00
- Reinstatement fee (after 3 months) \$50.00

- Reclassification to HTR fee..... \$125.00
- Reapplication fee (within in 1 year)..... \$ 35.00

3. Mailing address: AHTA Headquarters
2150 N 107th St, Ste 330
Seattle, WA 98133

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

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

4. Email all professional registration correspondence to the AHTA Office, info@ahta.org.

II. Professional Registration - Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner

A. Academic Requirements

1. The completion of all nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy coursework is the baseline for professional registration as a therapeutic horticulture practitioner, THP.

2. The nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy may be achieved through:

- a. AHTA Accredited Certificate Program. All horticultural therapy coursework completed through a certificate program must be from an accredited certificate program and 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. All coursework must have a passing grade of C minus (C-) or above or a pass for a pass/fail course.

B. Work Experience Requirement

1. A minimum of 500 hours of documented work experience in therapeutic horticulture services is required. Work experience is defined as a combination of therapeutic horticulture direct client service delivery, non-direct client services, and supporting horticulture responsibilities.
2. Therapeutic horticulture service delivery is defined as direct client contact utilizing horticultural activities as the primary modality.
3. Hours:
 - a. The 500 hours of work experience in therapeutic horticulture may include employment and/or volunteer service.
 - b. Hours may be paid or unpaid.
 - c. Of the 500 hours, a minimum of 60% must be in direct client services, or 300 hours, and a minimum of 40% of the total hours, or 200 hours, may be a combination of non-direct client services and supporting horticulture services.
 - d. Hours may include:
 - 1) Direct client hours – hours providing therapeutic horticulture services to clients in a group or one-to-one.
 - 2) Non-direct client services:
 - Documentation - documentation specific to a client activity, example progress notes, treatment plan.
 - Program planning/preparation – planning and preparation for specific client interventions and/or groups.

- Client meeting – client assessment, multi-disciplinary team meetings, case conference.
- Supervision meetings – supervision hours.

3) Horticulture services - direct plant, garden, greenhouse, landscape maintenance, and pest management.

III. Academic Coursework

A. Horticultural therapy coursework may be a combination of semester and quarter credits. The total combined credit must equal the required nine (9) semester credits in horticultural therapy.

B. 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

IV. 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. Introduction to Horticultural Therapy:
 - 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. 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)

2. 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

3. 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

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