



Therapeutic Recreation

College of Science and Health

The UW-La Crosse Therapeutic Recreation major is designed to prepare students to become Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists (CTRSs). While most colleges and universities offer a recreation major with a concentration in therapeutic recreation, UW-La Crosse is one of the few universities to offer therapeutic recreation as a major.

Nationally Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists assist persons with disabilities or illnesses in order to improve their functioning and quality of life. These may be achieved through the development of a meaningful leisure lifestyle.

Comprehensive therapeutic recreation services include an approach based on the needs, interests, abilities, and strengths of clients. Services are offered on a continuum of care which includes: treatment, which incorporates recreation activities to improve functional abilities and assist in diagnosis; leisure education, which focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help attain an independent lifestyle; and recreation participation, which uses recreation activities to enhance health and development.

Undergraduate Program

Major:

- Therapeutic Recreation

Minors and Specialties:

- Inclusive Recreation
- Child Life Specialty

Department Features

Students learn to develop and implement therapeutic programs using recreational activities such as exercise, horticulture, arts and crafts, games, music, reminiscence, pain management, and stress management. These goal-directed programs help individuals and groups with disabling conditions to learn, adapt, and grow through leisure participation.

Internships

A full-semester internship at an approved agency site under the supervision of a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist is required. The internship brings the student into the workplace for a hands-on experience. This occurs. Approved internship sites are available throughout Wisconsin and in many regions of the United States. Internship sites include: Courage Center, Minneapolis, MN; St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield,

WI; Winnebago Mental Health Institute, Winnebago, WI; Special Recreation Districts in the Chicago area; Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; The Rocky Mountains MS Center, Denver, CO; and Challenge Alaska, Anchorage, AK.

Accreditation/Awards

The UW-La Crosse program is accredited by the National Recreation and Park Association. It is the only accredited program in Wisconsin. Both the Wisconsin Recreation and Park Association-Wisconsin Therapeutic Recreation Society and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association have awarded UW-L with recognition for "Excellence in Therapeutic Recreation Education." UW-L has one of the most comprehensive therapeutic recreation curricula in the country.

Faculty

While many schools have one faculty member in therapeutic recreation, UW-La Crosse has five. Faculty are active in local, state, and national professional organizations, and four are nationally credentialed as Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists. Faculty have diverse professional interests and are available to advise students.

Clubs and Campus Organizations

Students have the opportunity to join our active Therapeutic Recreation Majors Club. Objectives of the club are to enhance learning and increase professional development in all areas of therapeutic recreation. Other campus organizations that students may be interested in are Students Advocating Potential Ability (SAPA), and the Recreation Majors Club.

Special Admission Requirements

- A successful fifty (50) hours of therapeutic recreation experience (volunteer or paid) must be documented before enrolling in RTH 456. See your faculty advisor about qualifying experiences.
- Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 or greater to enter the program.
- Students must obtain a therapeutic recreation faculty advisor when admitted. Advisors are assigned by the SAH College Dean's Office.
- Before enrolling in Internship (RTH 498), all required courses must be completed with a grade of "C" or better; and the student must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5.

Minors and Specialties Information:

Inclusive Recreation

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, public agencies offering recreation programs must accommodate people with disabilities. In order to prepare professionals from a variety of disciplines, a minor in Inclusive

Recreation has been established. Courses address architectural and program accessibility, disabling conditions, adaptive activities, and the APIE process. Students interested in play areas, sports complexes, outdoor recreation, golf, boating and fishing facilities, amusement parks, and aquatic facilities would benefit from this minor.

The Inclusive Recreation minor is not a comprehensive therapeutic recreation curriculum. It is not intended to lead toward national certification. The Inclusive Recreation minor is academic preparation intended to help professionals who are not therapeutic recreation specialists provide inclusive recreation programs.

Child Life Specialty

Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLSs) help reduce the stress and anxiety that many children experience in hospital and healthcare settings. Knowledge and application of foundations in theories of child development, play, stress and coping, and family systems are the basis for child life professional practice. Child Life programs in health care settings promote optimum development of children and their families in order to maintain normal living patterns and to minimize psychological trauma. No one major course of study is required to become a CCLS (i.e. therapeutic recreation major, psychology major, etc.). The therapeutic recreation major offers courses and limited dual internships in child life, in addition to other relevant therapeutic recreation courses. Students are eligible to sit for both the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist exam and the Child Life examination after successfully completing the recommended coursework.

Sample Courses

- Leisure Education
- Assessment and Treatment Planning in Therapeutic Recreation
- Therapeutic Recreation Trends and Issues

- Internship in Therapeutic Recreation
- Human Anatomy
- Innovative Activities
- Medical Language
- Abnormal Psychology
- Lifespan Development
- Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation

Career Opportunities

Entry Level

- Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- Activity Director
- Activity Therapist
- Leisure Education Specialist
- Recreation Leader
- Recreation Therapist
- Rehabilitation Specialist
- Inclusion Specialist

Areas of Employment

- Acute Care Hospitals
- Adult Day Care Centers
- Adventure Programs
- Camp Settings
- Chemical Dependency Treatment Programs
- Correctional/Forensics Centers
- Facilities serving people with Intellectual Disabilities
- Experiential Education
- Gerontology Programs
- Group Homes
- Health Care Centers
- Human Services
- Long Term Care Facilities
- Mental Health Facilities
- Nursing Homes
- Psychiatric Hospitals
- Rehabilitation Hospitals
- Senior Citizen Centers
- Special Olympics
- Veterans Administration and General Medical Centers
- Youth Development (Youth At Risk) Programs

Occupational Outlook

Therapeutic recreation services are provided in a variety of treatment,

residential, and community-based health and human service agencies for people of all ages who are experiencing limitations resulting from illness, disabilities, and/or social problems. In treatment settings, therapeutic recreation is part of the interdisciplinary treatment team. In other settings, therapeutic recreation may use leisure education and/or recreation to enhance the health and well being of the client.

Therapeutic recreation majors, upon graduating, are eligible to become Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists (CTRSS) through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. CTRSSs work throughout the US. Jobs are plentiful in cities and suburbs; jobs are also available in smaller rural towns.

Job placement for our graduates in therapeutic recreation has been at 93 percent. Agencies that have employed UW-L graduates include: Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; Wisconsin Resource Center, WI; Gundersen/Lutheran Medical Center, WI; Mendota Mental Health Center, WI; and North Suburban Special Recreation Associations in Illinois.

Visit the following websites to learn more about Therapeutic Recreation:

UW-L Department of Recreation Management & Therapeutic Recreation:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/sah/rmtr/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: Recreational Therapists:
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos082.htm>

Professional Associations

American Therapeutic Recreation Association:
<http://www.atra-online.com/>

Therapeutic Recreation Program
2036 Health Science Center
(608) 785-8207
http://www.uwlax.edu/sah/rmtr/ug_tr/index.htm