

## The Value of CTRS Specialty Certification

As healthcare evolves, the technical knowledge and skills required to practice successfully in a complex service environment increase significantly. Although a broad range of professional skills are essential, there is an increasing expectation to develop focused and specialized knowledge and skills that are distinctive to specific populations and service sectors.

### Advanced Levels of Practice and Outcomes

Health and human service professionals who acquire a higher level of knowledge and more advanced skills provide the consumer with a greater depth of service compared to individuals who practice at less advanced levels. Specialization is well recognized within professional practice and has become the norm within the health and human service delivery system today.

### Benchmarks of Specialization

Establishing a method to distinguish therapeutic recreation professionals who practice at an advanced level is essential to ensure expected outcomes, quality of care, and risk management. The attainment of advanced knowledge and skill in TR/RT is acquired via several methods including education programs, conferences focused upon specific skills or diagnostic populations, and the successful acquisition of expert skills that have been mastered over a substantial period of practice.

**The CTRS Specialty Certification recognizes advanced knowledge and skill in focused areas of service and provides verification of established expertise to other professionals, patients/consumers, and the general public.**



## NCTRC: Dedicated to Professional Excellence

Established in 1981, the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) is a non-profit, international organization dedicated to professional excellence for the protection of consumers through the certification of recreation therapists.

Professional recognition is granted by NCTRC to individuals who apply and meet established standards for certification, including education, experience, exam, and continuing professional development. The Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential is offered to qualified individuals based on these stringent requirements.

NCTRC is dedicated to improving the quality of human service and healthcare standards and maintains a relationship with the Joint Commission and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). NCTRC provides credential verification services to employers and healthcare agencies. These services are strongly encouraged by NCTRC to monitor personnel adherence to the standards of the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

NCTRC is a charter member organization of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). NCTRC is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

**For more information about NCTRC and to review current certification standards refer to our website at: [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org)**



NCTRC is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and the CTRS Credentialing Program is accredited by National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

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Recreation Therapy

## CTRS® Specialty Certification

**Recognition of  
Competence Beyond  
the CTRS® Credential**



**National Council for  
Therapeutic Recreation  
Certification®**

## CTRS: Benchmark of Quality Service

The Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS®) is the most professionally advanced recreation therapist, combining education and work experience to meet the standards of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification.

The CTRS credential is a strong and viable credential for the current healthcare and human service market. It is recognized nationally as the benchmark of quality and assures for the protection of the consumer and the provision of safe and effective therapeutic recreation services.

Hallmarks of the NCTRC credentialing program include:

- NCTRC Certification Standards, based on the knowledge and skill necessary for competent practice within a wide range of service sectors as verified by a national job analysis.
- Successful completion of an international certification exam.
- Required recertification program designed to measure continued competence.
- Adherence to NCTRC Disciplinary Standards to retain the CTRS credential.

**Recreation Therapists who possess the CTRS credential have demonstrated the necessary competencies, abilities, and skills for practice in a wide variety of healthcare and human service settings.**

### Why Specialty Certification?

**The primary purpose of NCTRC specialty certification is to acknowledge the CTRS whose practice has reached an advanced professional level, and to provide formal recognition of competence beyond the CTRS credential. NCTRC specialty certification provides an additional level of assurance to patients, consumers, and employers regarding the delivery of quality recreation therapy and therapeutic recreation services.**

## Specialty Certification Areas

NCTRC awards specialty certification in the following five areas of practice:

- **Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation**
- **Geriatrics**
- **Developmental Disabilities**
- **Behavioral Health**
- **Community Inclusion Services**

Each of these designated areas of practice is considered a distinct and separate segment of the TR/RT delivery system within specialty certification.

### Eligibility

The NCTRC Specialty Certification Program is a direct extension of the CTRS credential and therefore, only individuals who possess active CTRS certification are eligible to apply.

### Multiple Specialty Certifications

An active CTRS can apply and be awarded multiple specialty certifications if a separate application is completed for each specialty certification designation.

### Recertification Requirements

Specialty recertification is required every five (5) years and must be submitted at the scheduled time of the CTRS recertification.

**Consult [www.nctrc.org](http://www.nctrc.org) for detailed descriptions of qualifications, application and renewal requirements, timeliness and fees.**



## How to Qualify for Specialty Certification

### Path A Option

**CTRS:** Active status

**Education:** Completion of 75 continuing education hours with a minimum of three (3) professional certificate trainings within a designated specialty area. Each professional certificate training must be for a minimum of six (6) CE hours. The CE hours must be completed during the five year period prior to application.

**Experience:** Completion of five (5) years of full-time professional TR/RT experience within a designated specialty area.

**References:** Submission of two professional references: one from a peer professional and one from a recent employment supervisor.

### Path B Option

**CTRS:** Active status

**Education:** Graduate Degree in TR/RT; Completion of nine (9) graduate-level credit hours within a designated specialty area.

**Experience:** Completion of one (1) year of full-time professional TR/RT experience within a designated specialty area.

**References:** Submission of two professional references: one from a peer professional and one from a recent employment supervisor.