

EDUCATION STANDARDS

For Programs Providing
Art Therapy Education

Effective Date: July 1, 2002

MISSION STATEMENT

The American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (AATA) is an organization of professionals dedicated to the belief that the creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life enhancing.

Its mission is to serve its members and the general public by providing standards of professional competence, and developing and promoting knowledge in, and of, the field of art therapy.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Education Committee's purpose is to serve the art therapy profession and general public by:

1. establishing and promoting standards for education;
2. supporting the development of educational programs and encouraging diversity among these programs;
3. fostering communication among educators; and
4. providing information to the public regarding educational standards and opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

Art therapy education came into existence through the pioneering efforts of independent practitioners. Standards were developed to assist educators in planning and implementing effective graduate level programs of study. Originally, AATA established Education Standards for clinical, institute and Master's degree programs. Today, one set of standards is recommended for all graduate level programs.

Professional entry to the field of art therapy requires, at a minimum, a Master's degree.

Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the current standards and procedures of the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB) including but not limited to *Adopted Revised Standards and Procedures for Registration*.

This document will be effective July 1, 2002 and replaces the Education Standards which were effective April 30, 1994.

In this document the title ATR signifies that an art therapist is currently registered with the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB).

In this document the title ATR-BC signifies that an individual is currently registered and, in addition, Board Certified through examination by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB).

EDUCATION STANDARDS For Programs Providing Art Therapy Education

The American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (AATA) grants approval for educational programs preparing students for practice as art therapists. Approved programs must meet the following standards adopted by the AATA. These standards are predicated on the view of the AATA that preparation for the practice of art therapy is achieved at the Master's degree level.

I. PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

All education must be offered in an academic program accredited by a recognized national, regional, or state accrediting body.

AATA offers educational standards under which graduate level art therapy programs may apply to the AATA Education Program Approval Board (EPAB) for approval.

Those programs which have received approval by AATA have met the standards as of the time of their application for initial approval or re-approval.

II. ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

- A. The program shall require that each student admitted to the program must hold a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in the United States, or have equivalent academic preparation from an institution outside the United States.
- B. The program shall require that each student, before admission to the program, must submit a portfolio of original artwork, which is evaluated by the faculty of the art therapy program as demonstrating competence with art materials in preparation for the program.
- C. The program shall require that each student admitted to the art therapy program must successfully complete not later than one (1) year after entering the program (and including credits taken before admission):
 1. a minimum of fifteen (15) semester hour credits (or twenty-two [22] quarter-hour credits) of study in studio art; and
 2. a minimum of twelve (12) semester hour credits (or eighteen [18] quarter-hour credits) of study in psychology which must include developmental psychology and abnormal psychology.

III. FACULTY

The program must demonstrate that the numbers of faculty members and their assignments adequately provide for course teaching, student advisement, and supervision of students.

- A. The director of the program in art therapy must:
 - 1. be a full-time appointee of the institution housing the program; and
 - 2. be a Registered and Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC).
- B. All members of the graduate faculty teaching art therapy core curriculum courses (IV.B.1.) must be Registered Art Therapists.
- C. At least one-half of the art therapy faculty must have practiced art therapy within the most recent five (5) year period.

IV. REQUIRED CURRICULUM

- A. A minimum of 45 graduate semester credits is required for graduate level art therapy education. [60 graduate semester credits may be required for licensure or clinical education standards in some states.]
- B. Required Content Areas
 - 1. Required art therapy content areas:

A minimum of 24 semester credits in art therapy courses is required. Faculty members who hold an ATR are eligible to teach the following content areas. The course of study must be sequential and include the following components:

 - a. history of art therapy;
 - b. theory of art therapy;
 - c. techniques of practice in art therapy;
 - d. application of art therapy with people in different treatment settings;
 - e. art therapy assessment;
 - f. ethical and legal issues of art therapy practice;
 - g. standards of practice in art therapy;
 - h. cultural diversity issues relevant to art therapy practice; and
 - i. thesis or equivalent.
 - 2. Required related content areas:

These content areas may be taught by faculty from related fields and/or faculty members who hold an ATR.

 - a. psychopathology and diagnostics
 - b. human growth and development
 - c. group dynamics
 - d. research
 - e. studio art
 - 3. Practicum/Internship
 - a. Practicum/Internship:

Each student must be required to successfully complete supervised practice as follows:

 - 1) a minimum of seven hundred (700) hours of supervised art therapy practice;
 - 2) a minimum of 350 hours of supervised practice in which the student must be working directly with patients in individual, group, or family formats;

- 3) the balance of the supervised hours must include discussion of student work with the supervisor(s) and related activities including, but not limited to, case review, record keeping, preparation, and staff meetings.
- b. Supervision:
Supervision may take place on- or off-site.
 - 1) Art Therapy Supervision
 - a) Individual Supervision: For every ten (10) hours of client contact, there must be one (1) hour of supervision by a registered art therapist (ATR); or
 - b) Group Supervision: The ratio of eight (8) students to one (1) ATR supervisor may not be exceeded for group supervision. There must be two (2) hours of group supervision for every ten (10) hours of client contact.
 - 2) For every ten (10) hours of related activity, there must be one (1) hour of supervision by either a Registered Art Therapist (ATR) or a qualified professional with at least a Master's degree in a related discipline.
- C. Specialization:
The art therapy program must provide opportunities for specialization in competency areas such as variations in patient age, practice setting, and type of intervention (individual, group, or family).

V. EVALUATION

- A. Student Evaluation
 1. Each student must be evaluated regularly on achievement and progress in course work and clinical competencies.
 2. The program must maintain a record of the evaluation of each student in each course and in supervised practice.
- B. Program Evaluation
 1. The program must maintain and follow a regular procedure by which the courses, practical training, instructors, supervisors, and administrators are evaluated by students and graduates. Recommendations for change are to be solicited, gathered and considered.
 2. The evaluations of the program must be used to modify the program so as to promote its improvement and to implement recommendations as appropriate.

VI. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- A. The program must have regular access to the following facilities:
 1. classrooms for academic courses;
 2. studio space for working with art materials; and
 3. offices and conference rooms for faculty study and student advisement.
- B. The program must have regular access to the following equipment:
 1. audio-visual equipment for classroom instruction;
 2. studio art equipment and special supplies;
 3. office supplies for documents needed in instruction and record keeping; and
 4. computer equipment and Internet access.

C. Both students and members of the art therapy faculty must have access to a collection of art therapy literature including texts, books, and journals.

VII. STAFF SUPPORT

Secretarial, clerical, and other administrative support must be available to the director and faculty of the art therapy program.

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