

February 24, 2017

Kavita Khera
Senior Manager
Program Standards and Evaluation Unit
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
Mowat Block, 23rd Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Kavita:

I am writing about the 2018-2019 Program Standards Review and Development for Recreation Therapy and Recreation for Special Populations in Ontario.

Therapeutic Recreation Ontario is the professional association that represents 1600 practitioners, educators and students. Since our inception in 1999, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) has had strong relationships with Therapeutic Recreation (TR) educators around the province. This is well demonstrated through our active and engaged Therapeutic Recreation Provincial Educator's Steering Committee (TRPESC) which is made up of representatives from college diploma, college post-graduate certificate, and university TR programs. It is through this committee that we understand the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) Program Standards for the Recreation Therapy diploma and Recreation for Special Populations certificate programs are scheduled for review in the 2016-2019 plan. Please note that within this context, the terms Recreation Therapy and Therapeutic Recreation are interchangeable.

TRO would like to offer its support to the program standards review team. Specifically, we would like to share our Essential Competency Framework (ECF) for Therapeutic Recreation document, a resource developed by practitioners and educators in Ontario. Details of the ECF are outlined below. In addition, we also welcome the opportunity to be included in the stakeholder consultations.

About the ECF for Recreation Therapy:

Designed to serve as a foundation for the scope of Therapeutic Recreation education within the province of Ontario, the ECF outlines the core values, minimum standards and competencies to

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be acquired over the course of a student's academic training. The ECF compliments the Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) Standards of Practice and articulates competencies

Recreation Therapy practitioners should have upon graduation and should continue to practice throughout their career as a Recreation Therapist in Ontario. The performance indicators within each competency are dynamic, and will continue to grow and change as the field evolves. The performance criteria have been designed to measure student skills and competence and were created using the Standards of Practice for the Therapeutic Recreation profession (Therapeutic Recreation Ontario, 2012) as a foundation and guide.

The ECF is an outcome-based, client-focused functional framework based on 11 units of competency. The Framework assists in guiding the development of TR education, facilitating evaluation of TR practice, and identifying competency areas requiring further development. This tool has been developed for and with educators to ensure consistency in foundational knowledge required to provide competent, safe practice.

The ECF as a Resource for Program Standards Review and Development:

We believe that the ECF will prove to be a useful tool during the MAESD Program Standards Review and Development process as it will provide guidance to the Ministry as to the values, TRO Standards of Practice and competency dimensions for TR practitioners. In addition, adherence by education institutions to the ECF will promote a consistent standard of quality education for students, while strengthening the field of Therapeutic Recreation. This is especially useful as post-secondary education institutions in Ontario develop new diploma/degree/post-graduate certificate TR programs.

TRO TR Curriculum Review for Registration:

In the fall of 2015, TRO launched a new initiative, the TR Curriculum Review for Registration Eligibility. The purpose of the TR Curriculum Review for Registration Eligibility process is to assess the curriculum of existing TR programs (diploma, degree and post-graduate certificate) to determine alignment with the Essential Competency Framework (ECF). The mutual goal of educators and TRO is to standardize curriculum across Ontario so that students will experience a consistent academic and practical education and prepare them for their Registration designation with TRO upon graduation. Increasingly, employers are preferring candidates who have their Registration designation as it indicates that the candidate has achieved a level of excellence.

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The following schools voluntarily submitted and had their curriculum successfully reviewed for adherence to the ECF:

Universities:

University of Waterloo (degree)

Colleges:

Georgian College (post-graduate certificate)

Lambton College (post-graduate certificate)

Mohawk College (diploma)

Niagara College (diploma)

The following schools have indicated their intent to submit: Canadore College (diploma) and St. Lawrence College (post-graduate certificate).

Next Steps:

TRO and representatives from TRPESC would be pleased to meet with the Ministry staff leading the Recreation Therapy Program Standards Review. Please feel free to contact me at 289-626-TRO1 (8761) ext. 1 or by email at ed@trontario.org if you have further questions and to arrange a meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rozalyn Werner-Arcé', written in a cursive style.

Rozalyn Werner-Arcé, CAE
Executive Director

Cc: Vanine Yee, Senior Policy Advisor

About TRO:

Established in 1999, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) is the professional association that represents 1600 Therapeutic Recreation (TR) practitioners in the province. Our membership includes practitioners, educators and students. Our mission is to guide, support, educate and advocate to enable the Therapeutic Recreation practitioner to deliver quality professional services. TRO member services include professional development, networking, access to research and best practices, advocacy, and a Registration designation.