Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department

Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services

Internship Manual
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- Appendix A: Map of Recreation Centers
About Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department (MCPRD)

The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department is home to more than 210 parks and facilities located on more than 18,000 acres of parkland throughout Mecklenburg County. The department is also responsible for 256 miles of trails, 18 recreation centers, 21 nature centers, 7 public golf courses, 3 indoor pools, 2 outdoor pools, a public campground and disc golf courses.

The formal branches and subdivisions of the Park and Recreation Department include:

- Nature Preserves and Natural Resources
- Aquatics Division
- Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services
- Recreation Centers
- Park Planning Division
- Park Services Division
- NC Cooperative Extension

About the Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services

Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services Mission Statement:
“To provide therapeutic recreation services for individuals who have disabilities that focus on abilities, rather than disabilities and encourage people to attain their highest level of independent leisure functioning by increasing leisure skills, improving social and communication skills, increasing independent living skills and increasing their awareness of and involvement in community recreational activities; to advocate for and ensure inclusive opportunities in all program services; to act as advocates for individuals with disabilities by promoting accessibility at all Department parks, facilities, programs, special events and classes.”

The Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services of MCPRD is one of the largest community-based TR programs in the state of North Carolina. The TIRS currently employs 9 full-time staff along with two-part time staff, all of whom hold state licensure through the North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure (LRT) and national certification through the National Council of Therapeutic Recreation Certification (CTRS).

The Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services staff members focus their programming efforts on citizens of Mecklenburg County who have disabilities. Some of the diagnoses addressed by the TIRS include: Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, visual impairments, hearing impairments, autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, spina bifida and other developmental and physical disabilities.

Programs offered through the TIRS are broken down into the following categories:

- Social and Community Programs
- Adaptive Sports Programs
- Early Intervention and Inclusion Programs
- Adult Programs
- Summer Days Camps
- Paralympic Sports
Goals of the Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services Internship Program

- To assist Universities by providing community based, clinical practice opportunities for TR internship students.
- To assist TR internship students to acquire the skills and competencies needed for the practice of therapeutic recreation.
- To assist TR internship students discover their strengths and limitations and prepare them for practical work-related situations within the field of therapeutic recreation.
- To help TR internship students develop an awareness of the total range of the fields of practice (i.e., methods, activities, and settings) and to help interns gain a better understanding of the day to day operations of the department.
- To provide TR internship students with opportunities for practical experiences in therapeutic recreation with professional supervision and guidance.
- To provide the opportunity for exchange of ideas between professionals and TR internship students.

Responsibilities of the Intern

- Possess sufficient education including an obtained cumulative GPA of 3.0, fieldwork, and observation experience meeting school requirements to be eligible to apply for an internship.
- Have no other conflicting commitments during the 15 week, 560-hour internship. Interns must be available to work at all times, including weekdays, evenings, and weekends as scheduled by the intern supervisor.
- Respect the MCPRD-Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services philosophy, methods, leadership and programs.
- Represent the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department in a professional manner, provide creative ideas, and learn from every opportunity provided. The intern must be willing to spend the time it takes to complete work properly, with pride and enthusiasm.
- Become familiar with and adhere to the policies and procedures pertaining to the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department.
- Accept responsibility for the duties and assignments outlined by the intern supervisor, by meeting all project timelines and due dates.
- Prepare for meetings with the internship supervisor, by being prepared to ask questions and present constructive ideas, as well as share honest feelings and reactions.
- Acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities for practicing therapeutic recreation by following the Department’s performance schedule with increasing autonomy and independence.
- Adhere to MCPRD’s social media policy & Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services’ Confidentiality policy.
Responsibilities of the MCPRD Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services

- Provide the TR internship student with a high quality, well rounded, 15 week, 560 hour therapeutic recreation internship that will support the professional growth, experience and development of the intern.
- Follow the Internship Guidelines set forth by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC).
- Provide the TR internship student an opportunity to gain practical experience under the professional leadership of an internship supervisor who is certified through NCTRC, with at least one year of experience in therapeutic recreation practice, and at least one year of employment with MCPRD – TIRS. Internship supervisors must hold and maintain national certification (CTRS), and state licensure (LRT) according to North Carolina law.
- Treat the intern as a professional-in-training and prepare the MCPRD-Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services staff for the intern’s arrival as such.
- Follow internship guidelines set forth by the university or college.
- Communicate regularly with the academic supervisor about the student’s progress.
- Provide a formalized professional orientation program for the intern. Educate the intern about the Department’s programs, facilities, resources, policies and procedures, and administration of MCPRD.
- Provide duties and responsibilities that make the student feel valued and needed, and which include all aspects of the TR process.
- Complete all steps of new hire process including Temp Hire Packet, I9 & Drug Screen, Badge/Access Request, and Email/IT Request.

Responsibilities of the College or University Internship Coordinator

- Send an internship contract or agreement from the college or university before the beginning of the internship.
- Provide the MCPRD-Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services with updated school internship manuals.
- Make the MCPRD- Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services aware of college criteria for internship evaluation by providing the internship supervisor with all the necessary forms for the evaluation and graded portion of the internship.
- Monitor the student’s internship experience through weekly reports, telephone consultations and site visits.
- Evaluate all assignments, written reports, evaluations and assign final grade, in consultation with the internship supervisor.
- Understand the MCPRD- Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services’ programs, program goals and objectives.
- Maintain contact with MCPRD-Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services internship supervisor throughout student’s internship, to ensure both MCPRD and the university are aware of any issues or conditions that may arise during internship.
Internship Outcomes

Upon the completion of an internship with the MCPRD Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services, a student should be able to:

- Accurately perform assessments on current participants
- Demonstrate understanding of TIRS policies and procedures
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt to group dynamics when involved in programming
- Facilitate current TR programs with staff assisting
- Complete programming process (from proposal to customer survey)
- Identify other sites with employed CTRS within Mecklenburg County
- Identify community resources available to individuals with disabilities in Mecklenburg County
- Demonstrate knowledge of diagnoses and behavioral interventions

Internship Information

The Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department strives to provide its interns with a training experience that is of practical benefit to those entering the therapeutic recreation work force. We value our interns, both as the professionals of the future and for the services they provide today. Interns are encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions about any TIRS or MCPRD function or service.

General Conduct –

- Interns are entering the final part of their education and experience before joining the professional world, and are expected to behave accordingly.
- All interactions, both verbal and written, should reflect a professional attitude.
- Interns are expected to behave in an honest and ethical manner regarding their supervisor, other staff, and program participants.
- Work schedules are to be followed consistently. Any change in the intern’s schedule must be initiated or approved by the agency supervisor.
- **Interns must follow all County and Departmental policies, including:**
  - Adhering to the County’s dress code
  - E-mail and internet usage policies
  - Confidentiality

Working Conditions –

- Interns are employees of the Department, and therefore are held accountable to standards and policies of Mecklenburg County.
- Interns must provide their own transportation to and from their workplace, including any additional locations to which they must travel during the workday.
- Interns will receive an outline of their duties which relates directly to their level of time commitment and level of skill.
- Interns are expected to work a 39-hour week, which may include evenings and/or weekends, according to the duties to which they are assigned.
- Under no circumstances will interns be solely responsible for children or for transporting participants in their own or the Department’s vehicles.
• The internship supervisor is responsible for providing quality supervision, and will therefore make every effort to provide constructive and positive direction so that learning can occur in a supportive manner. It is the intern's responsibility to use supervision in an open, honest manner by bringing issues to be discussed to the Supervisor.

Housing –
• Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation does not provide housing to student interns.
• If requested, staff will gladly assist interns in searching for an apartment or other living arrangements.

Evaluations –
• The formal evaluation process will be agreed upon by the intern’s academic supervisor and the Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services.
• Mid-term and final evaluations will be completed by both the intern and agency supervisor, with input from other TR Section professional staff having contact with the intern.
• Interns will be evaluated and given feedback by a CTRS during each program that he/she attends, co-leads, and/or leads. Feedback will be discussed with the Intern and his/her agency supervisor.

Discipline –
• If unsatisfactory behavior or performance is observed, the agency supervisor will initiate a progressive disciplinary process to prevent the conduct or performance from becoming a consistent problem.
• The intern will be provided with the guidance necessary for improvement of their conduct or performance, and a timeframe for such improvement to be made.
• If the intern’s conduct or performance fails to show improvement in the time allowed, the agency supervisor may initiate dismissal.
• If disciplinary action is taken, the affected intern and their academic supervisor shall be informed of the procedures for expressing any concerns or grievances.

Dismissal of an Intern –
• Interns who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the Department, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their assignment are subject to dismissal.
• Interns will not be dismissed until the intern has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their TR Section supervisor and their academic supervisor, as well as the TR Manager or Senior TR Manager.
• Prior to dismissal of an intern, the agency supervisor will seek the consultation, assistance and approval of the Senior TR Manager.

Temporary Employees –
• Employees who are temporary may be terminated immediately without following the progressive discipline process. There is no right of appeal to an Employee Review Panel for temporary employees. Appropriate documentation of the termination will be included in the employee’s personnel file.

Reasons for Dismissal –
Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following:
• Absence from set work schedule without prior notification of Supervisor.
• Failure to abide by Department policies and procedures.
• Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.
• Gross misconduct or insubordination.
• Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
• Physical or verbal mistreatment or abuse of participants or co-workers.
• Misuse or abuse of the Department’s confidentiality policy.
• Theft of property or misuse of Department equipment or materials.

**Resignation**

• Interns may resign from their internship with the TR Section at any time.
• It is requested that interns who intend to resign provide fourteen calendar days written notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.
Intern Assignments

**General Duties** –
- Weekly meeting with immediate internship supervisor (hereafter Supervisor) – Discuss responsibilities, progress, questions, concerns and schedule.
- Internship Goals – Submit 3-5 personal goals for the internship, due at end of week 1, and continue to maintain documented progress towards achievement of goals.
- Weekly Report – Narrative submitted to Supervisor each Friday. Report will consist of:
  - Summary of experiences, meetings, etc.
  - Upcoming responsibilities
  - Personal highlights and feelings
  - Future direction and goals
  - Any required writing/content from University
- Outlook Updates – Maintain current schedule of appointments, assignments, and other related documentation in outlook and share with supervisor for approval.
- Assist with existing programs as assigned by Supervisor, including preparation, set-up, implementation and breakdown.
- Perform all aspects of leading a program, as agreed with Supervisor, including development, marketing, planning, registration of participants, assessment, implementation and evaluation.
- Evaluations – Complete mid-term and final evaluations.
- Complete required projects including individual case study, site visits, program development, program leadership, and long term project.
- Maintain Things to Be Accomplished (TTBA) progress throughout internship.

**Assignments** –

**Major Assignments for all Interns**
- Case Study
- Program Leadership
- Long Term Project

**Other Assignments**
- Spring and Fall
  - Plan and implement one North Party or Dance
  - Plan and implement School’s Out Club
  - Possibility present at local or state Therapeutic Recreation conference
- Summer
  - All program leadership assignments (see below).
  - Other assignments will be contingent to whichever camp the intern is placed into.

**Descriptions of Internship Assignments** –

All assigned projects shall be of value to the intern and the Therapeutic and Inclusive Recreation Services. Specific projects will reflect the current needs of the TIRS. Projects will be determined by the internship supervisor, in agreement with the intern’s academic supervisor and the TIRS Section Manager.

- **Individual Case Study**
  - Identify participant for case study in agreement with Supervisor
• Conduct participant assessment including:
  o History, diagnosis, disability information, leisure lifestyle and interests, personal goals, etc.
• Develop individual therapeutic recreation goals and objectives, with suggested activities and potential outcomes for the chosen participant
• Develop an individualized program for the participant which will include:
  o All lesson plans for activity to be implemented
  o Any necessary adaptations to be made
• Keep documented progress notes made throughout duration of implemented activity
• Conduct an evaluation of implemented program including success, changes, and overall program value
• Present case study power point presentation to TIRS

- **Program Leadership**

Throughout the course of the MCPRD TIRS internship, the intern should flow through a continuum of shadowing and observing programs to completely planning and leading a program with minimal assistance from the internship supervisor. During the first week of the internship, the intern and Supervisor should identify existing TIRS programs for completing the Program Leadership assignment. The intern will begin shadowing the staff member currently leading the program, and by week 13 should be planning and leading the program independently while the CTRS gives minimal assistance.

**Spring and Fall Internships:**
- Intern will implement two adult day programs, one sport, and one young athletes program.
- Intern will have two weeks of observing program, two weeks of co-leading program, and two weeks of independently leading the program.

**Summer Internships:**
- Intern will implement one session of art, one session of crafts, one session of cooking, one session of music, one session of gardening, and one session of sports each week for weeks 4-8 of camp.
- Intern will spend weeks 1-3 of camp shadowing and assisting camp sessions to prepare for independently leading starting week 4.

Below is a suggested guideline for program leadership:

**Weeks 1-2:** Intern shadows CTRS as a program assistant

**Weeks 3-4:** Intern begins assisting with creating program plans; assumes responsibility of preparing necessary materials & equipment; and leads designated portions of program

**Weeks 5-7:** Intern begins completing program plans to be approved by intern supervisor; continues to lead designated portions of program; begins managing participant behaviors and practicing behavior modification techniques; and assumes responsibility of completing all required documentation, attendance records, and satisfaction surveys.
Weeks 8-10: Intern continues to complete program plans & post-program procedures; leads at least 50% of program time; and assumes responsibility of communication with participants’ families. Intern supervisor should begin to refrain from intervening in managing transitions, participant behaviors, etc. while intern is leading program.

Weeks 11-12: Intern continues with established responsibilities; leads at least 75% of program time; and begins assisting with making all necessary program arrangements (field trips, vendors, etc.)

Weeks 13-15: Intern has assumed complete leadership of program by:

- Creating all detailed program plans
- Preparing materials and supplies for each program date
- Submitting all necessary facility and purchase requests
- Scheduling all necessary volunteers, field trips, vendors, etc.
- Completing program registrations
- Leading 100% of program time and participant behaviors
- Remembering any medications that need to be administered during the program
- Maintaining necessary communication with participants’ families
- Completing all required documentation, attendance records, and satisfaction surveys

Intern supervisor acts as a program assistant, only interacting with the group as directed by the intern, to assist participants in the bathroom, and to administer medications.

- **Long Term Project** –
- **Note:** Long term projects are subject to change according to the needs of the TIRS and/or the populations being served. Additional projects ideas can be discussed with Supervisor based on the current needs of the TIRS.

  - Development of marketing strategies for the TR Section as a whole and for TR Section Programs; and development of marketing tools which may include: flyers, newsletters, webpage and other electronic media, news releases, etc.
  - TR Departmental Special Project; which is to be proposed by the students and approved and/or guided by the Supervisor and TR Senior Manager.
  - Completing of a TR Departmental FALT goal including research, implementation and idea presentation.
  - Update or create new TR Department policy and procedures forms with supported research.
  - Program Development
    - Successful program development is an integral part of working in the MCPRD TIRS. Interns will complete all steps of developing a new program, either as a component within an existing TR program or as a new, independent program. See Below for the guidelines for completing the Program Development project.

- **Program Development Guidelines**
  - Complete and submit the required program proposal forms. Due to internship supervisor by the end of week 4.
• Submit proposed program dates, times, facility, and flyer. Due to internship supervisor by the end of week 6.
• Submit detailed program plans. Due to internship supervisor by end of week 7.
• Implement program session. To be completed by end of week 12.
• Send Customer Satisfaction Survey to program participants. To be completed immediately following program implementation.
• If intern is proposing a new, independent program, timeline may need to be adjusted in order to account for marketing and recruitment time. Intern should then complete marketing, recruitment, and registration with minimal guidance from internship supervisor.
**Community Gardens**

For those who have covered! Over 405 garden plots are available when fishing. Parks. All state regulations must be followed when fishing. Some of our favorite and most unique playgrounds include the Play60 Course at Freedom Park, the Play60 Challenge Course at Hornet’s Nest, the Nature Explorer Zone at Reedy Creek Park (next to the nature center) and the Rayce Playce playground at Nevin Park. With six popular dog parks and more planned, you and your pooch are sure to have a great time. Each dog park has both large and small dog enclosures, where the dogs and can run free unleashed. Dogs and owners need to follow all posted rules and please remember, dogs must meet all guidelines and maintain current vaccinations to utilize the off-leash areas.

**Dog Parks**

With six popular dog parks and more planned, you and your pooch are sure to have a great time. Each dog park has both large and small dog enclosures, where the dogs and can run free unleashed. Dogs and owners need to follow all posted rules and please remember, dogs must meet all guidelines and maintain current vaccinations to utilize the off-leash areas.

**Fishing**

Grab the rod and reel and head to a nearby park or nature preserve. With over 27 miles of shoreline on three lakes and numerous ponds and fishing piers, it won’t take you too long to find your favorite spot. Lakeshore parks include Jetton, Ramsey and Blythe Landing parks on Lake Norman, as well as Latta Plantation Nature Preserve on Mountain Island Lake and McDowell Nature Preserve on Lake Wylie. Fishing ponds can be found in Colonel Beatty, Freedom, Hornet’s Nest, Park Road and Reedy Creek Parks. All state regulations must be followed when fishing.

**Skate Parks**

Skate parks are perfect for in-line skaters, skateboarders, plus BMX bikers. Grayson SkatePark features a flow/ street course complete with banks, transitions, corners and ledges. The almost 13,000 square foot facility boasts something for everyone – from beginner to extreme. The street course provides a variety of elements featuring banks, transitions, corners, rails and ledges. A multi-bowl ranging from 3 ½ to 10 ½ feet deep caters to the experienced bowl/vert crowd.

**Spraygrounds**

Outdoor spraygrounds are a great way to beat the heat in the summer. Bring the bathing suits and sunscreen and enjoy the day. Most have nearby shelters or picnic areas as well. Spraygrounds or water features to play in can be found at: Romare Bearden, First Ward Parks in uptown, Cordelia Park, Latta Park, Nevin Park, West Charlotte Park and the Capitan Jack area on Little Sugar Creek Greenway. More are planned.

**Hours of Operation**

Parks are open sunrise to sunset. Park gates will be open by 7:30 am. Parks with lighted facilities such as ball fields and tennis courts will remain open while reserved or in use but must close by 10:30 pm. For a comprehensive look into what Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation has to offer, check out the website at [www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com).

Better yet, visit a park with family and friends! With over 21,000 acres, 200+ parks, 250 athletic fields, 240 miles of trails, 190 playgrounds, 152 picnic shelters and countless other recreational amenities, you are sure to find something active and fun to do nearby! Here is some information on popular things to do and unique places to visit.

**Parks**

Whether you are a newcomer, a native Charlottean or have lived here long enough to put down roots, you will be amazed at all the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department has to offer.

Over 21,000 acres and 210 parks and facilities range from large to small and contain nearly every type of recreational amenity. These include Recreation Centers, Nature Centers and Senior Centers offering tens of thousands of recreational, educational and nature-based programs, to special events, access to three lakes, world-class swimming facilities and golf courses. Whether you want to attend a live music event in uptown Charlotte at Romare Bearden Park, or explore the outdoors at a remote Nature Preserve, Park and Recreation has something for you!
The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department is home to 210 parks and facilities located on more than 21,000+ acres of parkland throughout Mecklenburg County.

Parks in Mecklenburg County come in all shapes and sizes ranging from small neighborhood parks to large district parks. This map is only a sample of what Park and Recreation offers.

For more information on these parks or the other 115 neighborhood parks, nature preserves, recreation centers or greenways, visit www.parkandrec.com