

# Canadian Art Therapy Association Educational Standards



Educational Standards for Master Degree,  
Graduate Diploma and Post Master  
Certificate Programs in Art Therapy

**April, 2013**

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**Educational Standards for Master Degree  
and Graduate Diploma Programs in Art Therapy**  
**Effective: April 1, 2014**

**Rationale:**

The Canadian Art Therapy Association advocates for high standards in graduate art therapy training programs in Canada. In order to support existing programs and to guide developing programs, the Canadian Art Therapy Association has formulated the following standards for graduate degree and diploma art therapy programs in Canada.

**Introduction:**

To become a professional art therapist in Canada, a graduate level degree or diploma in art therapy is a requirement. The Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA) accepts art therapists for membership who have graduated from CATA-approved training programs. CATA considers approval of art therapy training programs upon a request from that program to become a CATA-approved training program. Each decision is made on an individual basis by the CATA Executive Council and is based on the degree to which the training program meets the suggested requirements below.

In order to build upon current standards and to make provisions for programs to comply with CATA's updated educational standards, these standards will be in effect as of April 1, 2014.

## 1. Institutional Accreditation

<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p>1.1 All educational institutions or programs must be accredited by appropriate provincial or applicable federal accrediting bodies</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>1.1 <i>There are regional or provincial differences, but accreditation is important for credibility, quality of services and accountability.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p> <p>Canadian Art Therapy Association [CATA] Standards of Practice (2003): D.1, D.5; Canadian Counselling Association [CCA] Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (1999) Principle: responsibility to society.</p>
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## 2. Admission and prerequisites for students

<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p>Prerequisites for Students:</p> <p>2.1 Students must minimally have an undergraduate degree in fine arts, psychology social work or counselling. If the undergraduate degree is in another area, a prior learning assessment can be recognized to determine appropriate equivalencies. The prior learning assessment (PLA) is required to be a rigorous document with a clear process.</p> <p>2.2 Students should be able to demonstrate an interest and a rudimentary understanding of the creative process in the visual arts. This may be in the form of a portfolio, interview, or be ascertained via a clear discretionary process by the training program.</p> <p>2.3 (a) Where provincial standards for public institutions allow, training programs should promote participants' personal therapy with a certified counsellor or art therapist. This may involve individual or group process.</p> <p>(b) When possible, the recommended personal therapy should be done during the course of training and prior to completion of the program. However, it may be done prior to entry into the program. Sufficient hours may vary at the discretion of particular programs but should be enough to foster deep personal awareness and understanding of therapeutic process.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>2.1 <i>A bachelor's degree is generally considered the usual entry point for graduate programs. It is important to maintain the quality of training compared with other professions.</i></p> <p>2.2 <i>The purpose is to consider applicant(s) affinity for art and potential to intervene with art as a therapeutic modality. In some cases mature and promising students appreciate personal creativity and meaning but have little formal art experience – they open up to the artistic process as their creativity develops.</i></p> <p>2.3 <i>Personal therapy helps participants appreciate the significance of the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic process. It also enhances insight, promotes objective work with clients, and alleviates burnout.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p>
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3. Faculty		
<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p>3.1 The Director must be a Registered Art Therapist. All faculty teaching subjects related to art therapy must also be Registered Art Therapists.</p> <p>3.2 It is recommended that at least half of the faculty have practiced art therapy within the last five years and/or demonstrate continuing competence and current knowledge.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>3.1 <i>The qualifications of the Director and the professional status of the faculty contribute to credibility.</i></p> <p>3.2 <i>It is important to maintain current standards, 'cutting-edge' applications, and relationship between theory and practice.</i></p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i>  <i>Art therapy training requires a comprehensive program and faculty support. Art therapy programs are distinct from particular workshops offered by a business or by an individual who advertises and conducts supervision or consultation directed to individuals simply wanting to learn specific techniques, but who have not trained as art therapists.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes of Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards (2003):  C: Professional Competence &amp; Integrity;  D: Responsibility to the Profession.</p>
4. Required Curriculum		
<p><b>Standards</b></p> <p>CATA recognizes that universities and diploma programs may differ in the way they allocate units or credits.</p> <p>4.1 The following course content must be covered to the degree that students can be competent and knowledgeable in each area:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The History and Theory of Art Therapy. This involves a thorough study of the historical development of the profession in Canada.</li> <li>b) Techniques of Practice in Art Therapy with experiential (class activities) components shared with peers and supported by faculty.</li> <li>c) Application of Art Therapy with different populations.</li> <li>d) Experiential (class activities) Group Work, Theory and Practice</li> <li>e) Art Therapy Assessment</li> <li>f) Ethical and Legal Issues in Art Therapy Practice</li> <li>g) Professional Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes developing knowledge of professional organizations, public policy, advocating for profession and</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>4.1 <i>The core curriculum assumes a program that moves from introductory to advanced levels of study. Educators have the responsibility to orient perspective students and trainees to all core elements of such programs and activities.</i></p> <p><i>The content largely involves credit courses, but particular components such as ethics, may also constitute special topics or within supervision.</i></p> <p><i>It is assumed that the duration of the program is sufficient length to offer a depth of knowledge and practice and opportunity for integration. This would normally be two years or equivalent, and the course totals should be a minimum of 500 hours.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003) - Principles: C. Professional Competence and Integrity; D. Responsibility to the Profession; K. Treatment Planning &amp; Documentation.</p> <p>CCA Standards of Practice (1999): Counsellor Education Training and Supervision:  F.1 – General Responsibility; F.2 – Boundaries of Competence; F.3 – Ethical Orientation; F.4 – Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities; F.5 – Welfare of Clients; F.6 – Program Orientation; F.9 - Self-Development and Self-Awareness.</p>

<p>client advocacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation to enter the job market, resume writing and interviewing skills.</li> </ul> <p>h) Cultural and Social Issues in Art Therapy.  i) Research Methods.  j) Special topics with experiential (class activities) components.  k) Thesis, Major Project or Art-Based Research, with a written component abiding by the most recent APA guidelines</p> <p>4.2: Required Curriculum in Related Areas, or documented completion prior to graduation.</p> <p>a) Psychopathology and the DSM V  b) Human Growth and Development  c) Counselling and psychological theories  d) Research Methods  e) Studio Art</p>	<p>4.1 g) <i>Professional practice may be covered through special seminars or modules.</i></p> <p>4.1 h) <i>Diversity training may consist of self-awareness and sensitivity training, special topics and class assignments.</i></p> <p>4.1 i) <i>A Thesis, Major project, or Art-Based Research with a written component, is required in a graduate program to demonstrate mastery of research skills and both creative and critical thinking. Master level writing to abide by the most recent APA guidelines.</i></p> <p>4.2 e) <i>The studio art options may allow equivalencies, including mentoring and mastery of art materials as part of self-development.</i></p>	
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**5. Supervised Practicum/Internship**

<p><b>Practicum/Internship</b></p> <p>5.1 In addition to coursework students need to develop art therapy and counselling skills through practical experience.</p> <p>5.2 The minimum requirement for all practicum is 700 hours. At least 350 of these hours should involve direct client contact.</p> <p>5.3 The other hours should involve practicum related tasks, including but not limited to, observation, case studies, supervision meetings, recording and notes, planning and developing treatment goals, and so forth.</p> <p>5.4 Ideally there should be more than one practicum for broader exposure to a variety of agencies and client population groups or diverse settings.</p>	<p>5.1 <i>Some programs may make provision for equivalencies and consider applicant's prior training through other master's level counselling professions. However, direct experience with the therapeutic art materials is essential.</i></p> <p>5.2 <i>The single criterion for required hours applies to both university and institute programs.</i></p> <p>5.4 <i>Ideally, there should be more than one practicum for broader exposure to a variety of agencies client population groups.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (1993): D.7; E.1-10.</p> <p>CCA Standards of Practice (1999) – Ethical Principles: Responsible Caring; Responsibility to Society</p>
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<b>6. Supervision</b>		
<p><b>Supervision:</b></p> <p>6.1 Students should have an opportunity for both individual and group supervision. A greater proportion of individual supervision is recommended.</p> <p>6.2 Supervision may take place either individually or in a small group. When the supervision is in the form of a small group, the ratio of four (4) students per supervisor for every two hours of supervision must not be exceeded.</p> <p>6.3 The minimum ratio for supervision is as follows: one (1) hour individual supervision for every ten (10) hours of client contact, and two (2.0) hours group supervision for every ten(10) hours of client contact.</p> <p>6.4 The supervisor should be a Registered Art Therapist.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>6.1 <i>Excellent supervision contributes to quality programs, students and the advancement of best practice for the welfare of clients and responsibility to society. Supervision sessions should be balanced and coincide with the practicum and client hours for effective learning.</i></p> <p>6.2 <i>Learning from peers in a small group situation can be a valuable enriching experience. Group supervision can offer multiple perspectives and can be as valuable as one-to-one. A combination of individual and group supervision is most advantageous.</i></p> <p>6.4 <i>It is a reasonable expectation for any individual who wants to train in an approved program to receive supervision from a Registered Art Therapist. This is also possible through distance supervision.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (1993): D.7; E.1-10.</p> <p>CCA Standards of Practice (1999) – Ethical Principles: Responsible Caring; Responsibility to Society</p>
<b>7. Evaluation</b>		
<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p><b>Student Evaluation</b></p> <p>7.1 Students should be evaluated regularly and should include procedures to monitor student achievement and progress in courses and professional competencies.</p> <p>7.2 The program is responsible to maintain a secure and confidential record of each student's evaluation and progress indicators regarding coursework and supervision.</p> <p><b>Program evaluation</b></p> <p>7.3 The art therapy training institute or educational facility should have an evaluation policy and follow regular procedure so that students can evaluate instruction, courses, internship, and supervision. Recommendations, where appropriate, should be considered to improve program delivery and effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>7.1 <i>A process whereby students can appeal their evaluation should exist and students should be made aware of this.</i></p> <p>7.2 <i>Student transcripts should be completed in a similar manner to other universities and colleges in Canada in order to support students' further education, transfer, etc.</i></p> <p>7.3 <i>While it is important to maintain clear boundaries and appropriate roles, it is assumed that art therapy education programs are able to monitor effectiveness and respond appropriately to feedback and recommendations for service delivery.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes of Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003): K.6; K.9.</p>

<b>8. Facilities and Equipment</b>		
<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p>8.1 The program (on-site) must have regular access to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classrooms.</li> <li>▪ Studio space for working with art materials.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate office and private space for advising or supervising students.</li> </ul> <p>8.2 The program should have customary access to the following equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audio-visual aids for classroom instruction.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate studio art equipment and supplies.</li> <li>▪ Office equipment and supplies as needed.</li> <li>▪ Computer and internet access where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>8.3 Students and faculty should, at minimum, have access to a thorough collection of art therapy literature, both historical and contemporary, journals and databases, and have opportunity to research broader mental health and expressive arts issues.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>8.1 <i>The program is responsible to provide an environment that is conducive to learning. This applies, in particular, to on-site programs. Space provided for studio activities should be safe, well-lit and ventilated.</i></p> <p>8.2 <i>Adequate and appropriate materials are important for academic learning and for experience with art materials.</i></p> <p>8.3 <i>Graduate education requires access to art therapy literature and related information. Quality education should consider the historical, contemporary and emerging trends in the literature.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003): IA- II Environment</p>
<b>9. Staff Support</b>		
<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <p>9.1 Administrative or clerical support is required for the Director and faculty of the art therapy program.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>9.1 <i>This is important to maintain quality and effective provision of services and educational opportunities.</i></p>	<p><b>Applicable Professional Codes or Principles:</b></p>
<b>10. Distance Learning Program Appendix</b>		
	<p><b>A Distance Learning Art Therapy Program (combining on-site and distance learning components) is designed for students unable to attend on-site school facilities on a full-time basis.</b></p>	<p><b>Hybrid/Blended Model of Art Therapy training based on the core curriculum</b></p>
<p>1. Studio art therapy experiential, face-to-face rather than a synchronous mode, was indicated as a necessary component of training for the development of an understanding of the dynamics of art therapy and therapeutic skill acquisition and must be incorporated into the distance learning curriculum.</p> <p>The distance learning program is required to provide an up-to-date, online, interactive learning system for students to interact with cohort members and faculty.</p> <p>2. Students are required to have access to internet connection and possess basic computer skills.</p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>1. <i>To enhance distance communication and interaction between students and faculty.</i></p> <p>2. <i>To minimize technical difficulties.</i></p>	<p><b>CATA Standard of Practice (date): C.5 peer support, consultation.</b></p>

Distance learning students should be familiar with audio/video conferencing equipment.		
<b>**Proposed to include a second appendix "APPENDIX II" for Post Master Art Therapy Certificate Program which will meet the same guidelines as the Graduate Diploma program minus the thesis/project because the student will have completed a thesis/project upon admission to the program. However, a paper or art-based research project may be considered to be part of the curriculum for the master certificate program</b>		