About the Program

The Recreational Therapy program at Slippery Rock University (often referred to as therapeutic recreation) is designed to prepare competent entry-level recreational therapists in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (behavior) learning domains. This profession requires students to work with individuals with disabling conditions in a variety of settings and specialty areas. Students receive hands-on preparation throughout their education. The recreational therapy program is designed so that, upon successful completion of course work toward their Bachelor of Science degree, students are eligible to take the national certification exam for recreational therapists.

The Recreational Therapy program at SRU has received national recognition from the American Therapeutic Recreation Association for “Excellence in Education” twice since 2000. The program was the fourth in the nation to be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education.

What is a Recreational Therapist?

Recreational therapists, also called therapeutic recreation specialists, use selective activities to address needs in the physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social domains of individuals with illness and disability. Recreation and other activity-based interventions are used to improve functioning, health and wellness, to promote independence and to improve overall quality of life.

Recreational therapists may work with individuals across the lifespan, from birth to old age, who have physical, intellectual or emotional illnesses and/or disabilities. They may work in mental health agencies, hospitals or rehabilitation centers, residential programs, long term care settings such as assisted living facilities or nursing homes, drug and alcohol treatment centers, pediatric facilities, jails, or in community-based recreation or service programs.

Major
- Recreational Therapy (BS)
- Pre-Physical Therapy SRU 3+3

Suggested Minors
- Animal Assisted Interventions
- Recreational Therapy
- Gerontology
- Psychology
- Adapted Physical Activity
Clubs and Organizations
• Recreational Therapy Club at SRU
• Active Minds
• Adapted Physical Activity Council

Career Opportunities
Credentialed recreational therapists (Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists) are employed in positions of varying responsibilities that include:
• Recreational Therapist
• Director of Therapeutic Recreation, Recreational Therapy, Activity Therapy or Activities
• Life Enrichment Coordinator
• Activities Director
• Clinical Manager
• Program Specialist

Professional Organizations
• American Therapeutic Recreation Association
• National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification
• Pennsylvania Therapeutic Recreation Society

Why choose Recreational Therapy at SRU?
Students in the Recreational Therapy program at Slippery Rock University have many opportunities to work with a variety of clinical populations, engage in experiential learning and study and conduct evidence-based research in the field of recreational therapy. These opportunities are incorporated into many of the curricular requirements, so students receive hands-on experience as soon as they begin the program.

The Recreational Therapy program provides as much direct experience as is possible, utilizing the on-campus Recreational Therapy Laboratory and the Storm Harbor Equestrian Center (featuring equine and horticulture therapies), as well partnering with outside agencies and organizations to provide clinical practice options for students.

All full time faculty members are Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists with years of clinical experience. All are committed to growth of the profession and all are frequent presenters at local, state and national conferences and workshops. In addition, all current full-time faculty members have served on the American Therapeutic Recreation Association board of directors. You’ll study and work with an active and committed faculty.

In addition to the Bachelor of Science in recreational therapy, Slippery Rock University offers a RT 3+3 physical therapy option. Through this option, students major in recreational therapy while also completing the prerequisites for physical therapy school. All recreational therapy coursework is completed at an accelerated pace so that students complete the BS in recreational therapy in three years and apply for PT school in their third year. The 3+3 option is academically rigorous, requiring strong preparation in the sciences and a tremendous dedication and commitment to academic study. Students who are interested in other graduate school options can also receive guidance for preparation in related degrees such as counseling and occupational therapy.