

## **CATA Educational Standards**

for Master's Degree, Graduate Diploma and Post Master Certificate Programs in Art Therapy  
as of August 25, 2021

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### **Rationale:**

The Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA) 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.

### **Introduction:**

To become a professional art therapist in Canada, a graduate level degree or diploma in art therapy is required. The 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 Board of Directors and is based on the degree to which the training program meets the 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 August 25, 2021.

2006-05-07 - Completed by Helene Burt and Nick Zwaagstra

2006-11-01 - Revised based on program feedback

2007-01-15 - Revised based on feedback

2012-06-01 - Revised by Olena Darewych, Darlynn Hildebrandt, Lucille Proulx, Michelle Winkel, Nick Zwaagstra

2013-02-01 - Revised based on program feedback

2015-04-01 - Revised language by Lynn Holloway, Michelle Winkel

2021-07-07 – Revised by Heidi Argyle based on program feedback

STANDARD	RATIONALE/COMMENTS	STANDARD/CODE
<p><b>1.0 INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION</b></p> <p>1.1 The school/program is accredited by applicable governmental accrediting bodies.</p>	<p>1.1 There are provincial differences, but accreditation is important for credibility, quality of services and accountability.</p>	<p>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>
<p><b>2.0 ADMISSION PREREQUISITES</b></p> <p>2.1 Students must have an undergraduate degree in fine arts, psychology, social work or counselling.</p> <p>a) If the undergraduate degree is in another area, a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) will be used to determine appropriate equivalencies. The PLA is required to be a rigorous document with a clear process.</p> <p>b) or, where an applicant does not hold an undergraduate degree equivalence may be evaluated by the program.</p> <p>2.2 Students are able to demonstrate an interest and 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.</p> <p>2.3 Where provincial standards for public institutions allow, programs promote participants' personal therapy with an art therapist or certified counsellor. This may involve individual or group processes.</p> <p>a. When possible, the personal therapy will be done during the course of training and prior to completion of the program. However, it may be done prior to entering the program. Sufficient hours may vary at the discretion of the school, but should be enough to foster deep personal awareness and understanding of the therapeutic process.</p>	<p>2.1 An undergraduate degree is generally considered the usual entry point for graduate programs. It is important to maintain the quality of training compared with other professions. (C) Programs are required to perform an equivalent assessment to establish suitability based on work, life, or education experience.</p> <p>2.2 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.</p> <p>2.3 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.</p>	

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<p><b>3.0 FACULTY</b></p> <p>3.1 The Director and all faculty who are teaching subjects related to art therapy must be registered art therapists.</p> <p>3.2 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>3.3 A Maximum 10% or 32 course hours of content, not related to art therapy may be delivered by a qualified instructor who does not hold art therapy registration.</p>	<p>3.1 The qualifications of the Director and the professional status of the faculty contribute to credibility of art therapy</p> <p>a) Registration to be RCAT or equivalent.</p> <p>3.2 It is important to maintain current standards, ‘cutting-edge’ applications, and relationship between theory and practice.</p> <p>3.3 Allows flexibility in program delivery, and persons specializing in modalities related to or may inform Art Therapy practice.</p> <p>a) Co-facilitators who hold registration with another professional association add knowledge and expertise to related areas of study.</p>	<p>CATA Standards (2003): C: Professional Competence &amp; Integrity; D: Responsibility to the Profession.</p> <p>Supplemental: 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.</p>
<p><b>4.0 REQUIRED CURRICULUM</b></p> <p><i>CATA recognizes that universities and diploma programs may differ in the way they allocate units or credits.</i></p> <p>4.1 Course content, a minimum of 500 total hours must be covered to ensure students are competent and knowledgeable in each area are:</p> <p>A. History and theory of art Therapy</p> <p>a. This involves a thorough study of the historical development of the profession in Canada.</p> <p>B. Techniques of practice in art therapy</p> <p>a. with experiential components shared with peers and supported by faculty.</p> <p>C. Application of art therapy with different populations.</p> <p>D. Experiential group work, theory, and practice.</p> <p>E. Art therapy assessment</p> <p>F. Ethical and legal issues in art therapy practice.</p> <p>G. Professional Practice</p> <p>a. Includes developing knowledge of professional organizations, public policy, advocating for clients and the profession.</p> <p>b. Preparation to enter the job market, resume writing and interviewing skills.</p> <p>H. Cultural and social issues in art therapy.</p>	<p>4.1 The core curriculum assumes a program that moves from introductory to advanced levels of study. Educators have the responsibility to orient prospective students and trainees to all core elements of such programs and activities.</p> <p>The content largely involves credit courses, but particular components such as ethics, may also constitute special topics or within supervision.</p> <p>It is assumed that the duration of the program is sufficient length to obtain knowledge, practice and opportunity for integration of theory. This would normally be two years or equivalent, and the course totals should be a minimum of 500 hours.</p> <p>4.1 (G) Professional practices may be covered through special seminars or modules.</p> <p>(H) courses should consider ethical and legal considerations for online delivery.</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>I. Research methods.  J. Special topics with experiential components.  K. Thesis, major project or art-based research, with a written component abiding by APA guidelines.</p> <p>4.2:  Required curriculum in related areas, or documented completion prior to graduation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Psychopathology and the DSM 5.</li> <li>b) Human growth and development.</li> <li>c) Counselling and psychological theories.</li> <li>d) Research methods.</li> <li>e) Studio art.</li> </ul>	<p>(I) Diversity training may consist of self-awareness and sensitivity training, special topics and class assignments. Consider the diversity of representation of instructors on special topics.</p> <p>(J) 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.</p> <p>4.2 The studio art options may allow equivalencies, including mentoring and mastery of art materials as part of self-development.</p>	
<p><b>5.0 SUPERVISED 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 practicums is 700 hours. At least 300 of these hours should involve direct client contact.</p> <p>5.3  The other hours should involve practicum related tasks, including observation, case studies, supervision meetings, recording and notes, planning and developing treatment goals.</p> <p>5.4  Ideally, there is more than one practicum for broader exposure to a variety of agencies and client population groups or diverse settings.</p>	<p>5.1  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.</p> <p>5.2  The single criterion for required hours applies to both university and institute programs.</p> <p>5.3  Currency hours may include anything that facilitates learning related to the field of art therapy.</p> <p>5.4  Practicum sites may be clinical, community based or other unique settings where a student can obtain relevant skills for art therapy. Training settings are inclusive of culturally centered healing practices from within Canada and around the world.</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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<p><b>6.0 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, dyadic or in a small group.</p> <p>6.3 Small groups may not exceed 8 participants.</p> <p>a. When the supervision is in the form of a small group, the ratio of four 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 hour individual supervision for every ten hours of client contact, or two hours group supervision for every ten hours of client contact.</p> <p>6.4 <b>The supervisor must be a Registered supervisor* who is a registered art therapist, or equivalent.</b></p> <p>a. Students with a particular integrative therapeutic interest may allot up to 25% of supervision hours to be completed with a specialist with a registration in that field of practice (i.e, Drama, music or other).</p>	<p>6.1 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.</p> <p>6.3 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.</p> <p>a. Ratio is broken into number of hours a student will obtain from the supervisor (i.e 4:1 / 2 hours = 30 minutes per student)</p> <p>6.4 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. (a) Supervisors must be Registered Canadian Art Therapists (RCAT) or equivalent in their field, or elders from a cultural group or community.</p> <p><b>*Provision 6.4 “Registered Supervisor” is not in effect as of the time of this revision (08-25-2021). It has been included as Registered Supervisor requirement was voted by the CATA board. The working document of the supervision subcommittee includes guidelines for the CATA Clinical Supervision Application and Standards Policy. At the time of this publication, all supervisors must be a Registered art therapist or equivalent, see subsection 6.4 (a).</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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<p><b>7.0 EVALUATION</b></p> <p><b>Student Evaluation</b></p> <p>7.1 Students are evaluated regularly and there are 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 school has an evaluation policy and procedure for students to evaluate instruction, courses, internship and supervision. Where appropriate, recommendations are considered to improve program delivery and effectiveness.</p>	<p>7.1 A process whereby students can appeal their evaluation should exist and students should be made aware of this.</p> <p>7.2 Student transcripts should be completed in a similar manner to other universities and colleges in Canada in order to support students’ further education, transfer.</p> <p>7.3 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.</p>	<p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003): K.6; K.9.</p>
<p><b>8.0 FACILITIES &amp; EQUIPMENT</b></p> <p>8.1 The program has regular access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Classrooms.</li> <li>b) Studio space for working with art materials.</li> <li>c) Appropriate office and private space for advising/ supervising students.</li> <li>d) Audio-visual aids for classroom instruction.</li> <li>e) Appropriate art studio equipment and supplies.</li> <li>f) Office equipment and supplies, as needed.</li> <li>g) Computer and internet access, where appropriate.</li> <li>h) Up to date equipment and secure virtual platforms for online delivery.</li> </ul> <p>8.2 Students and faculty have access to a thorough collection of art therapy literature, both historical and contemporary, journals and databases, and have the opportunity to research broader mental health and expressive arts issues.</p>	<p>8.1 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.</p> <p>Adequate and appropriate materials are important for academic learning and for experience with art materials.</p> <p>8.2 Graduate education requires access to art therapy literature and related information. Quality education should consider the historical, contemporary and emerging trends in literature.</p>	<p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003): IA- II Environment</p>
<p><b>9.0 STAFF SUPPORT</b></p> <p>9.1 Administrative/clerical support is required for the Director and faculty.</p>	<p>9.1 This is important to maintain quality and effective provision of services and educational opportunities.</p>	

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<p><b>10.0 DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM</b></p> <p><i>A hybrid, blended, or online model of the art therapy training program will be required to maintain all other sections of the Canadian Art Therapy Associations Education Standards as listed above, as well as:</i></p> <p>10.1 Provide an up-to-date, online, interactive learning system for students to interact with cohort members and faculty.</p> <p>10.2 Experiential courses must be synchronous delivery.</p> <p>a. Students and faculty are required to have access to internet connection and possess basic computer skills.</p> <p>b. Distance learning students should be familiar with audio/video conferencing equipment.</p> <p>10.3 Programs must highlight security, confidentiality and other ethical considerations for online therapies.</p> <p>10.4 Programs will hire and/or train instructors for online delivery. Instructors should be competent in providing online therapy, technologies and securities.</p>	<p>A distance learning art therapy program or a program that combines on-site and distance learning components is designed for students unable to attend on-site school facilities on a full-time basis.</p> <p>10.2 Studio art therapy experiential delivered synchronously was indicated as a necessary component for training. In order for the development of an understanding of the dynamics of art therapy and therapeutic skill acquisition, synchronous learning must be incorporated into the distance learning curriculum. (b)To enhance distance communication and interaction between students and faculty and to minimize technical difficulties.</p> <p>10.4 Information may be blended into other core curriculum courses, such as ethics. (b)Knowledge should be updated regularly to ensure current and best practices.</p>	<p>CATA Standard of Practice (2003): C.5 peer support, consultation.</p> <p>CATA Standards of Practice (2003) C.1; D.1; and E.</p>