The Road Not Taken

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
This Pre-Internship Manual is a guide to prepare Recreation Therapy majors for their culminating, Recreation Therapy Internship. Students begin preparing for internship two semesters prior to the start of the internship experience. It is ideal that the student has completed their practicum prior to enrolling in RTH390 but it is not a pre-requisite of the course. The materials contained within this manual are meant to prepare and assist students in their search for an internship position. Students will either create or refine their resume, cover letter and list of references. They will also conduct a mock interview to prepare for the interviewing process required to obtain an internship site. Students will also begin to develop their portfolio which is a document that illustrates their work as a Recreation Therapy student and can be used during the interviewing process. In addition students will take time to begin to actively search for, and secure, an internship site.

**Prerequisites for RT Internship**

All students must meet the following criteria as determined by the RT Faculty prior to beginning their Recreation Therapy Internship:

a. Complete and pass all coursework required for the RT degree.

b. Be a senior in good academic standing, with a grade point average of 2.5 in the major and an overall grade point average of 2.0.

c. Obtain the First Aid, CPR, and Blood borne Pathogens certifications which must be current during the entire internship experience.

d. Secure approval of internship site and placement.

5. Attend all group meetings as announced/called by the Internship Coordinator.

**Student Responsibilities in Preparation for Internship**

TWO semesters prior to the semester in which the internship experience will occur, the student must:

1. Review the NCTRC and NCBRTL guidelines on the criteria for acceptable internship sites. See [www.nctrc.org](http://www.nctrc.org) and [www.ncbrtl.org](http://www.ncbrtl.org)

2. Confirm academic plan to meet all the pre-requisites for RTH 497 as stated in the course catalog and in the section above.

3. Revise resume, submit resume for review, and make copies for applications to internship sites once revisions have been made.

4. Discuss with the Internship Coordinator and your Academic Advisor any potential internship sites under consideration. Each student should have an idea of the general geographic location where he/she wishes to complete the internship and the type of client population (i.e., age group, disabling condition & setting) with which the students wishes to work.

5. Independently research potential internship sites. There is a list of potential sites posted on the SHAHS’s website. Students can also access the Internet for possible internship sites. For example, the TR Directory and the ATRA web sites post internships that are available across the country. NCRTA posts internships available in North Carolina. Links are also provided on the Blackboard Learn (BBL) webpage for this course (RTH 390). **Note: It is the student’s responsibility to obtain an acceptable internship site.**

6. Follow the timeline for completing preliminary responsibilities for enrollment from the Internship Coordinator. You will be given a checklist in RTH390 – you are responsible to ensure all materials are completed by the identified due date on the syllabus.
7. Submit to the Internship Coordinator a word processed list of sites to which you have submitted resumes & letters of application.

8. Ensure your Clinical Instructor (agency supervisor) (the recreation therapist who will be directly supervising your internship) is:
   a. Currently certified as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist™ (CTRS), have been certified as a CTRS for a minimum of 1 year, and
   b. If in NC, currently licensed as a Licensed Recreational Therapist (LRT) and a full-time employee of the agency working a minimum of 32 hours per week. You must obtain a copy of the clinical instructor’s NCTRC certification card or certificate and NCBRTL license.

9. Complete, with the assistance of the Internship Coordinator and the Clinical Instructor the Placement Confirmation Agreement (Placement Confirmation form in Appendix B of this manual).
   a. NOTE: If you are contacting a new agency, it must be approved by the Internship Coordinator, the RT Faculty, the Director of the School of SHAHS, and UNCW’s General Counsel before internship placement can begin. The Internship Coordinator has the forms to secure approval. Please request these in a timely manner. Allow a minimum of 6 weeks for this process. (See the Appendix A for the policies statement.)

Completion deadlines for submission of ALL paperwork are as follows:
- FOR THE SUMMER SEMESTER – APRIL 18th
- FOR THE FALL SEMESTER – AUGUST 18th
- FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER– NOVEMBER 18th

10. Follow-up all interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype, etc.) with a letter of appreciation to the interviewer.

11. Upon acceptance for the internship, submit a formal Letter of Intent (can be an email) to the Clinical Instructor.

12. Contact (via phone or email) all sites where you have applications pending to remove your name from consideration.

13. Obtain a list of ALL documentation the agency requires of them. All agency required documentation (e.g., immunization records, criminal background checks, fingerprinting, vaccinations (TB, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, etc.), and 9 or 10 panel drug screens must be provided by the student, at their own expense. Students understand that all results from these reports including criminal background checks, fingerprinting and drug screens will be shared with the contracting agency. Students should be aware that unfavorable reports could jeopardize their ability to secure their internship at a particular agency. If a student needs a background check run through the university, please contact the Internship Coordinator.

14. Know your responsibilities and assignments during your internship which can be found in the RT Internship Manual on BBL for RTH 390.

15. Plan ahead for housing—do not sign a lease that will prohibit you from leaving Wilmington for your internship. There are very few internship sites available in the Wilmington area, and students should plan on having to secure housing during their internship elsewhere.
Appendix A: Placement Confirmation Agreement

**Instructions:** To be completed by the Clinical Instructor administratively responsible for internship and returned to the Faculty Coordinator 2-4 weeks prior to the start of the internship.

This is to certify that ______________________________ has been accepted
(Name of student)
as a field work student with ______________________________
(Agency & department)

It is understood that the student is expected to work a minimum of 40 hours/week for at least 14 consecutive weeks, totaling at least 560 hours.

**Beginning date** __________________________, 20____

**Ending date** __________________________, 20____

*with the following exceptions:*

Agency Holidays ______________________________

Special Occasions ______________________________

*The following University approved person from our agency staff has agreed to serve as agency internship supervisor for this student.*

Name of Clinical Instructor: ______________________________

Address (office): ______________________________

____________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

Cell or Home Phone: ______________________________
(To be used only in case of emergency)

(Signature of Clinical Instructor)

(Signature of Student Intern)

(Note: Clinical Instructor should attach copies of CTRS and, if in NC LRT credentials to this form.)
Appendix B: Policies and Procedures for Approval of New Internship Sites

The School of Health and Applied Human Sciences has established policies and procedures for the approval of agencies/sites for all internships. These policies and procedures have been developed to ensure that the internship, as an extension of the classroom experience, is planned and supervised in a manner that is in the best interests of student interns. In addition, these policies and procedures are supported by external accrediting bodies for the academic program and the university, and are in compliance with the guidelines set forth by UNCW.

1. All clinical instructors must complete a “Request for Approval Application” form (available from the Internship Coordinator) upon initial request to be an affiliated site and at least every five (5) years thereafter.

2. All “Request for Approval” applications from agencies must include the following:
   a. A description of the agency;
   b. A description of recreation therapy services;
   c. A description of the intern’s duties and responsibilities;
   d. A weekly outline of the intern’s activities that align with the NCRTC Job Analysis;
   e. Copies of certification and, if in NC license (CTRS, LRT) held by the clinical instructor(s); and
   f. Confirmation that the clinical instructor is a full-time employee of the agency, working at least 32 hours per week.

3. Students seeking the approval of sites not currently included in the curriculum’s approved agency listing should contact the Internship Coordinator to discuss the procedures and to receive the agency approval application materials at least 6 weeks prior to their anticipated start date.

   a. The approval of new sites is initiated by the Internship Coordinator, and must be approved by the RT faculty, the Director of the School of Health and Applied Human Sciences, and UNCW’s General Counsel.

   b. All agency applications with supporting materials (see #2 above) should be returned by the site supervisor(s) to the Internship Coordinator.

6. Applications with supporting materials should be delivered to the Internship Coordinator no later than three (3) weeks BEFORE exams begin in the semester PRIOR to the student’s enrollment in internship.

7. The Internship Coordinator will provide support for the student during this process. However, it is the student’s responsibility to comply with the policies and procedures as stated above and to communicate regularly with the Internship Coordinator for progress updates.

10. Enrollment in internship is contingent upon: a) the completion of all required procedures and paperwork in the semester/term prior to the anticipated internship; b) compliance with the policies stated in 1-9 above; and c) satisfaction of course prerequisites as stated in the course catalog and this manual.

Students are encouraged to seek new internship placements that will assist them in meeting career goals. The keys to success with new site approval are starting early with the application procedures and communicating regularly with the Internship Coordinator throughout the process.
Appendix C: Policy on Taking Courses or Having Employment during Internship

Internship is a critical learning component for students to emerge into competent recreation therapists. In fact, a 14-week, 560-hour internship is required for the academic path to certification through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) and licensure through the North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure (NCBRTL). During internship, students will have opportunities to apply all the knowledge and skills developed during their coursework, which requires an incredible amount of time and effort. Due to the internship’s importance and academic requirements, we STRONGLY DISCOURAGE students from enrolling in any coursework during their internship, with exception to credits taken for internship (i.e., RTH 497 = 12 credits/full-time status). We also STRONGLY DISCOURAGE students from having a non-internship employment while completing their internship. There are many reasons for this stance, such as:

- Protecting the safety of students, patients/clients/participants/residents, and personnel at the internship site.
- Ensuring students place the priority on building necessary practical skills to be a competent recreational therapist during their internship.
- Being able to devote enough time to their internship assignments associated with course credit in RTH 497.
- Avoiding threats to mental health related to the stress of trying to balance a 40-hour/week internship, academic requirements for the internship, plus a job or another course.

We realize, however, some students in rare circumstances will need to take a course to graduate or need employment to pay essential costs of living (e.g., food, rent). If students must take a course during internship or are significantly struggling financially and need employment during internship, the student should talk with their RT advisor and/or Ms. Miller, the internship coordinator, to discuss their personal circumstances as early in the process as possible. The RT faculty member can help the student outline a plan to support their success during internship, with the first priority being not to take a course or being employed during their internship, while still addressing their personal needs. If the result of the meeting between the RT faculty member and student indicates course enrollment or employment is necessary during internship, the student must complete the Recreation Therapy Internship Work/Course Notification Form and submit the completed form to the internship coordinator, Ms. Miller.

If the student’s course enrollment or employment during internship is approved by the RT faculty, the following rules apply:

Course Enrollment:

- Course enrollment is limited to one course, which cannot exceed three credits.
- The course lectures, assignments, and activities must be able to be completed outside of the work schedule of their internship (e.g., after 5pm, weekends—students should keep in mind, some internships require weekend and/or evening hours).
- Course enrollment, separate from RTH 497 enrollment, must be approved by the internship site supervisor at their discretion. Students must communicate this need to potential internship site supervisors prior to accepting an internship.

**Employment:**

- The work hours must be completed outside of the internship work schedule (e.g., after 5pm, weekends—students should keep in mind, some internships require weekend and/or evening hours).
- The additional employment must be approved by the internship site supervisor at their discretion. Students must communicate this need to potential internship site supervisors prior to accepting an internship.

If a student finds it necessary to seek employment while already on internship, the student must seek permission from their internship site supervisor and their academic supervisor in writing prior to accepting employment, agree to the conditions below.

*Note:* Both course enrollment and additional employment during clinical internship will not be approved.

If the student does not uphold this policy, they will not be approved to begin their internship or will be withdrawn from their internship. Similarly, if completing the course or being employed is impacting the student’s performance during internship, the student will be withdrawn from their internship. Again, we want all students to place their priority on their internship because it is vital to their development as a credentialed recreation therapist and healthcare provider.
Recreation Therapy Internship Employment/Course Notification Form

☐ I realize that internship is considered a full-time commitment (i.e., 40-work hours per week in addition to required coursework and internship site projects).

☐ I will devote full time efforts to the internship.

☐ I am approved by the RT faculty member who has signed below to take a course during the practicum semester. My class schedule will be as follows:

☐ I am approved by the RT faculty member who has signed below to be employed during my internship. My working hours will be as follows:

☐ I realize that if working or taking a course negatively affects my performance during internship, I will be withdrawn from my internship and will not receive credit for RTH 497.

Intern signature: ________________________________
Intern name printed: ________________________________
Date: __________________

RT faculty member signature: ________________________________
RT faculty member name printed: ________________________________
Date: __________________

RT internship site supervisor signature: ________________________________
RT internship site supervisor name printed: ________________________________
Date: __________________

Provide an electronic copy of this completed form to Ms. Sara Miller, Lecturer, Recreation Therapy Internship Coordinator, millersm@uncw.edu