



MUSIC, performing and creative Arts professions involved in
healthcare:
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" Focus on music therapist professional profile"

Latvia

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Professional profile of MUSIC THERAPIST in Latvia

Music therapy is a relatively new health care field in Latvia, which can be characterized as scientific application of music by a trained music therapist in the context of a therapeutic environment and within a therapeutic relationship that aims to address a wide spectrum of health, psychological and social problems.

What is the status and regulations for music therapists' work in Latvia?

Music therapist is holding a Master's degree in Health Care in Latvia, and profession of music therapist is regulated by Standard of Profession and numerous enactments:

- 1) According to Classification of Medical Technologies applied in Latvia music therapy is approved medical technology (classified as medical technology under section "Medical rehabilitation services" along with art, dance and movement and drama therapy and such technologies as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy, and so on);
- 2) According to 45. paragraph of Law on Medical Treatment, music therapist is a functional specialist: a medical person with the higher medical education, providing the prevention, evaluation, analysis and treatment of mental, physical and functional disorders;
- 3) According to Classification of music therapist is unclassified senior healthcare specialist (group 2269) holding a code 3229 15 – art therapist with specialization in music, art, dance and movement or drama therapy;
- 4) According to Law on Health care organization and financing arrangements, manipulations of music therapist are financed from the state budget if prescribed by attending physician and delivered within a multidisciplinary team work.

Music therapy education in Latvia

Prospective music therapists (along with art, dance and movement and drama therapists) are trained at Riga Stradiņš University "Arts therapies" study programme and regional Liepaja University (trains music therapists only). Both are Master's level study programmes being devised in accordance with the 7th level of European Qualification Framework.

Total volume of both study programmes is 150 ECTS (4000 study hours, including 1200 contact hours). Students are provided with knowledge, skills and competency required for professional activity and being described in the Standard of Profession of Art therapist as well as Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 268 "Regulations regarding competency in treatment regarding medical practitioners and students acquiring professional programmes of the higher medical education of the first or second level and volume of theoretical and practical knowledge of these practitioners" adopted on 24.03.2009. Recommendations for the training of art therapists proposed by graduates of the programmes as well as employers and Latvia Music Therapy association have been taken into consideration during the development and update of programme.

Entry requirement is Bachelor's degree or higher professional education in social sciences, healthcare, social welfare, pedagogy, educational sciences or music. Matriculation in the study programme is being based on results of the entrance examination that is composed by essay of motivation (motivation for studies, previous experience in arts therapy and research interests), interview and examination of professional skills (piano and vocal improvisation for music therapists).

Graduates of both programmes are holding Professional Masters' degree in Health care and qualification of arts therapist with specialization in music (or art, dance and movement or drama) therapy. They are stimulated for constant improvement of competencies and are provided with further education opportunities organized by professional associations of all four arts therapy specializations.

By 2015, studies to become a music therapist were self-financed. Starting from academic year 2015/2016, there are 12 state-budget financed study places available at Rīga Stradiņš University.

What does music therapist know and can?

This is how a trained music therapist can be described in terms of knowledge, skills and competency:

Knowledge:

- to describe and explain concepts of medicine (including psychotherapeutic), social sciences and music related to the music therapy practice;
- to explain, compare and assess development history of music therapy and the newest contemporary achievements in the context of health and social care.

Skills:

- to assess health condition of patients and clients within their competency,
- working independently or in multi-professional team – to develop music therapy plan and implement it individually or working in group in accordance with the requirements of professional ethics applying inclusive – eclectic approach;
- upon selecting work methods/interventions and working with different groups of patients – to apply practice of music therapy based on evidence and apply new approaches, if necessary;
- to assess efficiency of music therapy in strengthening and improvement of patients' health according and justify the adopted decisions;
- to develop research project according to the basic research principles in music therapy, to implement the project, summarize and present the acquired results;
- to stimulate improvement of his/her competencies and further education.

Competency:

- upon working independently or in a multi-professional/inter-disciplinary team with different groups of clients/patients individually or in groups – to apply medical technology of music therapy and assess efficiency of his/her work;
- to apply the acquired theories, methods of music therapy/interventions and techniques according to the particular situation and needs of clients/patients;
- to plan and implement research in music therapy and, if necessary, apply new approaches;
- to implement ethical responsibility in practice by understanding of the possible influence of his/her activity on individual, group and society;
- to formulate independently and analyse critically the professional problems, to explain with arguments and discuss the matters of music therapy both with specialists and non-specialists of the particular field.

Where do music therapists work in Latvia?

In Latvia, music therapists are mostly employed in special education, health and social care institutions, including but not limited to psychiatric settings, rehabilitation centres, general hospitals, child and adolescent treatment centres, correction centres, special education institutions for mentally or physically handicapped or mentally troubled children. Music therapists are generally functioning as part of a multidisciplinary treatment team along with physicians, nurses, social workers, social pedagogue and other functional specialists. However, music therapist may also work as a private practitioner.

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