Table of Contents

What is RPTS? ............................................................................................................... 3
What Does RPTS Have to Offer? ............................................................................. 4
RPTS Programs
  Tourism Management ......................................................................................... 6
  Youth Development ............................................................................................ 8
  Community Recreation and Park Administration .......................................... 10
  Parks and Conservation .................................................................................. 12
  Event Management ......................................................................................... 14
  Hospitality Management ................................................................................. 16
High Impact Coursework
  Field Courses .................................................................................................. 18
  Study Abroad .................................................................................................... 20
  Internships ......................................................................................................... 21
Admissions ............................................................................................................ 22
Who Hires My Major? .......................................................................................... 23
Social Media .......................................................................................................... 24
Our Undergraduate Advisors ............................................................................... 24

What is RPTS?

RPTS is...
Students majoring in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences – RPTS – who want to make a positive difference in the world.

A major that provides a well rounded education developing students who think critically, lead with respect and serve the greater good.

A family of students, faculty and staff developing strong relationships in pursuit of lifelong learning.

Aggie graduates who work as:
Travel Specialists, Cruise Directors, Recreation Leaders, Resort Managers, Youth Camp Staff, Adventure Guides, Park Rangers, Event Coordinators, Military Recreation Specialists, and Environmental Educators

Developing Aggies who work for:

A Message from Our Department Head

You're invited to look through the pages that follow and learn more about the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences (RPTS) at Texas A&M University. We have a group of 25 dedicated faculty members who are passionate about the subjects they teach and they are among the world's leading scholars in tourism marketing, recreation finance, human wildlife interactions, sustainable tourism, leisure sociology and youth development.

This booklet is intended to help prospective students and parents with questions they may have about Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences as a major and as a career. The information about coursework options and the variety of employment possibilities can help answer questions about what the RPTS college experience offers and the places you can go!
What Does RPTS Have to Offer?

Undergraduate Major

Bachelor of Science in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

The first two years of studies build a foundation that spans a wide range of disciplines and bodies of knowledge in the arts and sciences and provide the student with an introduction to the history and concepts of recreation, park and tourism sciences. The second two years prepare students with the knowledge and skills for both entry-level positions and for future professional growth in the field. In addition to core courses, students must fulfill requirements for at least one certificate, but may earn additional certificates.

Undergraduate Certificates

Certificates are transcripted and include a frameable document.

Certificates Available to RPTS Majors Only

Tourism Management
is focused on preparing students to sustainably plan, manage, develop, and promote places and events as tourism experiences.

Youth Development
is focused on preparing students to contribute to the positive development of youth's personal, physical, social-emotional and educational abilities.

Community Recreation and Park Administration
is focused on preparing students for managerial careers with public recreation and park agencies, youth agencies, not-for-profit recreation agencies, and commercial recreation enterprises.

Parks and Conservation
is focused on preparing students for the management of natural and cultural resources associated with conserving parks and other protected areas.

Certificates Available to Any TAMU Student

Professional Event Management
is focused on preparing students to design, plan, manage, implement, and evaluate experiences, meetings, and special events.

Hospitality Management
is focused on preparing students to understand the planning, analysis, and decision-making techniques needed for management positions in the hospitality industry.

High Impact Coursework

Field Courses

• Military Recreation - Recently visited: Alaska, San Diego, Hawaii
• Camp Leadership and Management - Visits youth camps throughout Texas
• Park & Protected Area Management - Trips to Alaska, Great Smoky Mountains
• Attraction & Destination Management - Visits Texas attractions including San Antonio Spurs, Moody Gardens, Fiesta Texas, Schlitterbahn

Study Abroad

• South Pacific
  - The Great Barrier Reef, Australia (21 Days)
  - Tropical Fiji (10 Days)
  - Australia & New Zealand South Island (21 Days)
• Caribbean and Mediterranean Cruise Management (7 Days)
• Iceland Hospitality & Tourism (16 Days)

Internships

Students are required to complete a 6-credit, 400-hour internship working in the field of RPTS. Our students have interned with Walt Disney Co., Austin Parks and Recreation, Yellowstone National Park, Camp for All, and more.

For more information visit
https://rpts.tamu.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/recreation-park-tourism-sciences/
The Tourism Management certificate prepares students for careers in the tourism, hospitality and events industries. Students will learn how to sustainably plan, manage, develop, and promote places and events. Students will also be introduced to standards, practices, human resource issues, financing, regulations and laws related to the tourism, hospitality and event industries. Learning how to market tourism destinations and experiences is also a key aspect of this program.

*This Certificate is ONLY open to RPTS Majors

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**Flight Attendant**

Flight Attendants are responsible for attending to the safety and comfort needs of passengers aboard a flight.

- **Average Salary:** $47,000
- **Required Education:** High School Diploma

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**Cruise Ship Director**

Cruise Ship Directors are specifically in charge of ensuring all guests’ welfare and comfort throughout their time aboard the cruise ship.

- **Average Salary:** $57,000
- **Required Education:** Bachelors Degree

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**Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director**

CVB Executive Directors are responsible for leading and directing the administrative, operational, sales, marketing and communications functions of the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

- **Average Salary:** $89,000
- **Required Education:** Bachelors Degree

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**Theme Park Manager**

Theme Park Managers oversee all aspects of what makes the park run and consider what can be done to improve operations.

- **Average Salary:** $62,000
- **Required Education:** Bachelors Degree

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**Pictures from left to right:**

- Hosts from the PBS show “Two For the Road” visit RPTS to chat travel careers, and have some fun touring campus while learning Aggie traditions!
- Students meet virtually with students of UAQ University in Saudi Arabia. Students worked together all semester to complete a joint Tourism Development project for both countries.
- Students in the atrium of a Royal Caribbean cruiseship on their Cruise Management Study Abroad.

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“Through my course lessons, I introduce students to new cultures, destinations and ways of thinking. The best part of being a professor here is watching students have the realization that they will not only survive, but are eager to try something new, or consider a different way of thinking. I enjoy getting a message or postcard years after a student has graduated that shows their success or travels. #ProudProf”

Angela Durko, PhD, Instructional Assistant Professor

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“The RPTS department has provided me with so many opportunities to explore the industry, gain real world experience, and have a lot of fun doing it! I have been so lucky to gain many useful skills and industry insight from some of the greatest faculty and staff in the world! RPTS has opened so many doors for me and I am excited to learn more every single day. Becoming an RPTS major was one of the best decisions I have made in my college career!”

Jake Vasquez ’20, Current RPTS Student
Youth Development

Youth Development is focused on preparing students to contribute to the positive development of youth's personal, physical, social-emotional and educational abilities. Students are trained in cutting-edge theories of youth development and learn how to apply them to youth programs. Students learn practical skills for working with diverse youth and for promoting access to positive recreation and leisure opportunities for all youth.

*This Certificate is ONLY open to RPTS Majors

"My favorite experiences in the Youth Development program are when students start to understand the science of how youth learn and grow. A light bulb goes off when students start to connect the science of youth development with the practices of working with youth. My students often share good practices that they are already implementing with youth, but tell me that I have helped them to understand the science of it all."

Dr. Andrea Ettekal, Assistant Professor

"During my internship at Camp Lake Hubert, I was introduced to counselors and campers from all over the world. My knowledge on different cultures and perspectives grew significantly with every interaction I had. Before going into my internship, the prerequisite courses taught me everything I needed to know to be successful. Without this program and our supportive RPTS professors, I would not feel as prepared and excited as I am to continue working in youth development."

Tori Bitner ’20, Current RPTS Student

Careers in this Field

Youth Program Coordinator

Youth Program Coordinators develop youth-run programs in the community for youth and serve as advisors by advocating and empowering youth.

$49,000 Average Salary
Bachelors Degree Preferred Education

Camp Director

Camp Directors are responsible for directing staff trainings, weekly staff planning meetings, managing camper information and groupings, maintaining fiscal records and working within a budget, maintaining camp resources and supplies, and interacting with parents, campers, staff and administration as needed.

$78,000 Average Salary
Bachelors Degree Required Education

Youth Coach

Youth Coaches design and teach basic sports strategies to an assigned group of youngsters. Their job is to preside over all team activities and to teach valuable sporting skills such as teamwork, fair play, and sportsmanship.

$44,000 Average Salary
Bachelors Degree Required Education

Youth Minister

Youth Ministers coordinate time with children and teens for the purposes of worship, education, volunteer work and community outreach.

$49,000 Average Salary
Bachelors Degree Required Education
Community Recreation and Park Administration

The Community Recreation and Park Administration certificate is focused on preparing students for managerial careers with public recreation and park agencies, youth agencies, not-for-profit recreation agencies, and commercial recreation enterprises. In addition, this certificate program prepares those students wanting to serve our military service members through Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Departments with the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard, both in the United States and abroad. Students will be introduced to park and tour operations; management; principles of youth development; park planning and design; and public sources of funding.

*This Certificate is ONLY open to RPTS Majors

“As a former Parks and Recreation Director, I would have gladly hired graduates from TAMU’s Community Recreation and Park Administration program as the students gain experience in administration, budgeting, programming and complete an internship. Students graduate with many hours of practical experience and relevant skills.”

Rick Harwell, CPRE, Assistant Professor of the Practice

Administration

Careers in this Field

Park and Recreation Agency Director

Park and Recreation Agency Directors oversee the operations and finances of public parks and recreational spaces, typically under the supervisor of the City Manager.

$95,000 Average Salary | Bachelor's Degree Required Education

Military Recreation Specialist

Military Recreation Specialists provide support services to military personnel and their families. These include community housing, food service, physical fitness facilities, youth and outdoor recreation activities, arts and crafts, ceremonies, and unit level sports.

$45,000 Average Salary | Bachelor's Degree Required Education

Athletics Supervisor

Athletics Supervisors administers and participates in the scheduling of athletic facilities for classes, recreation use and use by outside groups.

$52,000 Average Salary | Bachelor's Degree Required Education

Park Planner

Park Planners develop short and long-range plans for the expansion and improvement of park lands, facilities, and programs.

$56,000 Average Salary | Bachelor's Degree Required Education

“Dr. Scott Shafer introduced me to site specific design. Many of us grow up experiencing public spaces but do not realize the time, effort and science that professionals put into creating those spaces. I have carried that into my everyday life as a park designer/planner.”

Hunter Rush ’08, MHS Planning & Design, Outdoor Space Designer

RPTS Former Student

Pictures from left to right:

• Students learning about urban parks.
• Outdoor Leadership students team building at Challenge Works.
• Students working on a park planning and design project.
The Parks and Conservation certificate is focused on preparing students for the management of natural and cultural resources associated with conserving parks and other protected areas. Job opportunities exist in every state in the country. In addition, students interested in working abroad may work with governments, non-profits, and NGOs around the world. Students will be introduced to management; environmental interpretation; management of wildland recreation; public sources of funding; and protection of natural areas.

*This Certificate is ONLY open to RPTS Majors

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Pictures from left to right:
- Students learning about the restocking of trout in the high country lakes of Utah.
- Students enjoying a kayaking trip.
- Students posed in the Sabinal River after admiring dinosaur tracks at Camp La Jita.

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“Once I decided to pursue a career as a National Park Ranger, I started looking for universities with a strong park and recreation science curriculum. RPTS was a logical choice both then and now; they have a nationally recognized program, and have generated a large number of both state and national park rangers.”

David Vela ’82, RPTS Former Student, Acting Director of the National Park Service

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“The Parks and Conservation program with RPTS has helped me get a foot in the door for my career. Through their connections with the National Park Service, I was able to work as an intern at a park, doing what I love, surrounded by nature.”

Alexis Girouard ’21, Current RPTS Student

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### Careers in this Field

#### Park Ranger

Park Rangers help ensure that campers, hikers, and other visitors are following the rules, are enjoying their experience and take care of the natural environment. They also research, develop, and conduct educational programs.

- **Average Salary**: $70,000
- **Required Education**: Bachelor's Degree

#### Environmental Educator

Environmental Educators plan such events, activities, and programs to educate the next generation about environmental issues and how they can help.

- **Average Salary**: $51,000
- **Required Education**: Bachelor's Degree

#### Conservation Manager

Conservation Managers are responsible for ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and environments.

- **Average Salary**: $89,000
- **Required Education**: Bachelor's Degree

#### Outdoor Adventure Guide

Outdoor Adventure Guides organize and conduct expeditions for sports enthusiasts, adventurers, tourists or resort guests. They work for adventure tourism companies, resorts, parks, lodges, campgrounds, or they operate their own small businesses.

- **Average Salary**: $31,000
- **Required Education**: Bachelor's Degree
The Professional Event Management Certificate is focused on preparing students to design, plan, manage, implement, and evaluate experiences, meetings, and special events. Students will take hands-on event management coursework which covers planning, promotion, operational logistics, sponsorship, evaluation, contracting, media, fundraising, risk management, and vendor management. They will also learn using hands on experience to implement a number of community and campus events.

*This Certificate is open to ALL TAMU Majors

For more information on this certificate visit: https://rpts.tamu.edu/pemc/

Dr. Donna Lee Sullins, Instructional Assistant Professor

“Event Management and Operations classes give students a chance to put into practice what they read about—not only during practical exercises in the classroom, but also in real life experience with a client event in the community that they plan and implement. We provide students the avenue to critically evaluate the thousands of decisions that make up an event.”

Katy J. MacManus ’20, Current PEMC Student

“PEMC has given me the great fortune of working on some truly inspiring projects and volunteering at amazing events. It has not only taught me the minor and major aspects one must consider when planning an event, but it has shaped me into the event coordinator I strive to be.”
Hospitality Management

The Hospitality Management certificate is focused on preparing students to understand the planning, analysis, and decision-making techniques needed for management positions in the hospitality industry. Students will develop skills related to principles of management, sustainability, development, cultural tolerance, marketing, finance, and service quality as they apply to the hospitality industry.

*This Certificate is open to ALL TAMU Majors

For more information on this certificate visit: https://rpts.tamu.edu/hsmg/

“Hospitality is more than warm customer service in the food and beverage and lodging industries, hospitality is a science that entails experiences in just about every environment that influence human outcomes including physical health and psychological wellbeing”

Dr. Courtney Suess-Raeisinafchi, Assistant Professor

“Hospitality Management provided worthwhile takeaways that immerse you into the industry and establish you as a hospitality professional. I’ve gotten to interview a leading professional in the hotel industry, collaborated with a team to run a semester long hotel simulation, and worked with a city client by producing a case study that improves their tourism.”

David Pham ’19, Current RPTS Student

Pictures from Left to Right:
• Students touring the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center during construction.
• Students learning about food and beverage operations.
• Students touring Kyle Field suites at Texas A&M University.
• Students learning about resort operations at the San Luis Resort.

Careers in this Field

Hotel/Resort Manager
Hotel/Resort Managers ensure that traveling guests have a pleasant experience at their establishment with accommodations. They also ensure that the business is run efficiently and profitably.

$54,000 Average Salary  Bachelors Degree  Required Education

Guest Experience Manager
Guest Experience Managers are responsible for looking after the needs of guests in a professional manner.

$33,000 Average Salary  Bachelors Degree  Required Education

Brewery/Taproom Manager
Brewery/Taproom Managers are also responsible for ensuring that customers have a positive experience during their visit.

$48,000 Average Salary  Bachelors Degree  Required Education

Food & Beverage Manager
Food and Beverage Managers plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the operations of restaurants, bars, cafeterias and other businesses that operate serving food and beverage.

$47,000 Average Salary  Bachelors Degree  Required Education
High Impact Coursework

Field Courses

Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences offers a number of field based courses that allow students to meet professionals on location and experience the people and places of our profession. Field courses provide first hand experiences that help students more clearly understand how, for example, a youth camps operates and meets the goal of developing positive and productive citizens; to see the amenities developed by tourism destinations for targeted audiences and how the military keeps troops mentally prepared and physically fit through special recreation programs. These courses can be invaluable through exposing students to the nuts and bolts of professional life and provide networking that can lead to a future career.

https://rpts.tamu.edu/field-courses/

Attraction & Destination Management

- Covers the importance and purpose of a destination’s attractions to consumer based, local communities, and career options.
- Visits Texas Attractions including San Antonio Spurs, Moody Gardens, Fiesta Texas, Schlitterbahn, Sea World, City Zoo’s, and more.

Camp Leadership and Management

- Covers structure, organization, administration and leadership challenges and opportunities facing professionals interested in careers in youth camps.
- Visits Youth Camps throughout Texas

Military Recreation

- Covers management theory as it relates to running events, recreation, and leisure experiences for military service members and their families.
- Recently visited Alaska, San Diego, and Hawaii.

Park & Protected Area Management

- Covers park planning, land acquisition, administration, maintenance, interpretation, and natural and cultural resource management.
- Trips to Alaska, Great Smoky Mountains, Hawaii, Texas’ Big Bend, and Utah
High Impact Coursework Cont....

Study Abroad

South Pacific
- The Great Barrier Reef | Australia
  This 21-day program uses the theme of sustainable development to explore the relationship between people and their natural environment.
- Tropical Fiji
  This 10-day program explores the complex relationships between Fijian cultural practices (both indigenous and Indo-Fijians), conservation of the natural environment, and eco-tourism.
- Australia & New Zealand South Island
  This 21-day program uses the theme of sustainable development to explore the relationship between people and their natural environment.

Caribbean & Mediterranean Cruise Management
Over 7 days, the program covers an introduction to cruise tourism, understanding cultural aspects of places traveled, cruise marketing/decision making, cruise ship operations, youth programming on cruise ships, and more.

Iceland Hospitality & Tourism
This course explores the hospitality and tourism services and opportunities in the country of Iceland through active participant observation over 16 days of travel from the most populous to least visited areas of the island.

Internships
Internships broaden students’ perspectives, allow application of classroom concepts and build important skills not available through traditional coursework. Internship experiences may also help students learn as much about where they do not want to work as where they do. This “real world” experience is invaluable to the educational process and critical to making students career ready.

Students are required to complete a 6-credit, 400-hour internship working in the field of RPTS. In the past, students have interned with:
- Paramount Pictures
- Navy Recreation
- Busch Gardens
- Lake Travis Zipline
- Four Seasons Resort
- Hilton
- Camp for All
- The Dallas Cowboys
- Yellowstone National Park
- Great Adventure Camp
- Houston Parks & Rec
- San Luis Resort
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Norwegian Cruise Lines
- Vail Mountain Resort
- Pathfinder Ranches
- Carnival Cruise Line
- Sky Ranch
- Houston Zoo
- Event Specialists

For past internships and opportunities visit https://rpts.tamu.edu/careers/

Pictures from Left to Right:
- Student Irrigating for Pathfinder Ranches in Wyoming
- Former RPTS Student, Micheal Stawick, demonstrating cable wakeboarding at his internship with Wakeside at The Barracks.
- Student Interning with Lake Travis Zipline Adventures
- Tourism Student, Jake Vasquez, interning with Disney’s Transportation Services in Epcot at Walt Disney World Resort.

For past internships and opportunities visit https://rpts.tamu.edu/careers/
Admissions

Freshman

In order to gain admission to the Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences as a freshman, students must meet TAMU Admissions requirements: http://admissions.tamu.edu/freshman/apply

Change of Major (Change of Curriculum)

The following criteria are used to evaluate applicants, but does not guarantee admission:
- 2.0 Overall TAMU GPA
- Number of college credit hours
- An essay providing reviewers with the following information:
  1) What is your passion?
  2) How did you gain this passion?
  3) What are your career goals?
  4) Why do you choose RPTS to help you reach those goals?
  5) If your GPA is below 2.8, explain what you are actively doing to increase your GPA.

Off Campus Transfer

Admission from other institutions is granted on a competitive basis. Students must meet the general requirements set by the University in addition to RPTS requirements:
- Minimum GPA of 2.5
- Minimum Transferable Hours is 24
- Second Choice Eligible -- Yes
- RPTS additional requirements -- See Transfer Course Sheet http://admissions.tamu.edu/transfer/majors

http://rpts.tamu.edu/undergraduate-admissions/

Who Hires My Major?

Tourism Management
Attractions Employee
- American Airlines
- Carnival Cruise Line
- Kabam Entertainment
- Disney
- CCRA Travel Commerce Network
Regional Tour Consultant
- EF Go Ahead Tours
- Savoya
Activities Director
- Vaquero Club

Hospitality Management
Management Trainee
- Aspire Eminence Group
Front Desk Manager
- Ambridge Hospitality
Manager-In-Training
- Four Seasons
Sales Coordinator
- Marriott Hotels
HOA Concierge
- Alteza Residences
Front Desk Agent
- Hilton Garden Inn

Community Rec & Park Admin
Facility Assistant
- Faithbridge Recreation Leader
- City of Rockwall
Asst. Recreation Supervisor
- City of College Station
Pure Recovery
- Asst. Director of Operations Weekend Coordinator
- Sky Ranch Christian Camps
Navy MWR Rec. Specialist
- Dallas Joint Reserve Base

Event Management
Wedding and Event Coordinator
- The Meekermark
Event Manager
- Innovation Event Management
Event Manager
- JW Marriott
Event Consultant
- Party Time Rentals
Event Coordinator
- Blackwood Vendor Coordinator
- Spectrum Concessions
Lead Coordinator
- Epoch Co+Events Conference Coordinator
- Gaylord Texas by Marriott Conference Assistant
- Texas A&M Hotel & Conf. Ctr.
Wedding & Event Staff
- Walt Disney World

Parks and Conservation Educator
- Blackland Prairie Conservatory Law Enforcement Ranger
- National Park Service Park Ranger
- National Park Service Guide
- Wayforward Adventures Park Ranger
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

Youth Development
Behavioral Specialist
- St. Jude's Ranch for Children Youth Coordinator
- Memphis Athletic Ministries Strength and Conditioning Coach
- DI Sports Training Outreach Coordinator
- Grace Bible Church Program Staff
- Camp For All Staff Associate
- Young Life

2018 & 2019 RPTS majors entered these jobs upon graduation.
Follow Us on Social Media

@TAMURecParkTourismSci
https://www.facebook.com/TAMU-RecParkTourismSci/

@TAMU_RPTS
https://www.instagram.com/tamu_rpts/

Pinterest.com/TAMU_RPTS
https://www.pinterest.com/TAMU_RPTS/pins/

https://rpts.tamu.edu/current-students/advising/

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