

## RATIONALE FOR REQUIRING A MINIMUM 330 HOURS OF FACULTY-SUPERVISED DIRECT MESSAGE THERAPY TO THE PUBLIC

### Preface

To meet the accreditation *Standard 1.12* set by the CMTCA, programs seeking accreditation must ensure that massage therapy students complete a minimum of 330 hours of faculty-supervised clinical practice. This requirement reflects the clinical depth, professionalism, and client safety expectations that are foundational to massage therapy practice. The 330-hour minimum supports high-quality care, public protection, and the professional credibility of massage therapists across Canada.

*1.12 As part of graduation requirements, students are required to have provided a minimum of 330 hours of faculty-supervised direct massage therapy to the public.*

### A Standard Based on National Consensus and Sound Rationale

The requirement of 330 hours of direct massage therapy is grounded in sound rationale. It was not chosen arbitrarily, nor in isolation. This standard was developed through extensive consultation with key interested parties in massage therapy education and regulation during the creation of the 2017 CMTCA Accreditation Standards, and was reaffirmed during the 2024 revision process.

### What constitutes Direct Massage Therapy

CMTCA defines Direct Massage Therapy as: *Activities that support the application of therapeutic practice and are done in direct contact with the patient/client. Direct massage therapy includes taking a history and consulting with the patient/client; developing and implementing an assessment plan; developing and implementing treatment plans; providing remedial exercise and self-care; and charting and recording of notes and findings. It does not include activities such as booking appointments or attending to laundry, or other such activities that could be done by someone else such as a receptionist or an assistant.*

This distinction is critical. Clinical hours must be devoted to activities that develop and assess clinical competence, not operational or administrative support. While tasks like laundry or appointment scheduling are important to clinic function, they do not contribute to therapeutic competency and are therefore not eligible to be counted toward the 330-hour requirement.

This definition is aligned with the professional scope and expectations set by regulatory colleges across Canada. It reflects the competencies required of graduates to safely and effectively provide therapeutic care to the public.



## Alignment with Other Health Professions

Across other regulated paramedical professions in Canada—including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, athletic therapy, and pedorthics—direct supervised client care is an essential, non-negotiable component of professional preparation. This standard is also consistent with the expectations of other regulated healthcare professions.

- Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy programs require over 1,000 hours of supervised clinical work.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Physiotherapy Assistant and Occupational Therapy Assistant programs require a minimum of 500 hours of supervised practicum, including at least 150 hours in Occupational Therapy and 150 hours in Physiotherapy. For single-discipline programs, a minimum of 350 hours of fieldwork is required to ensure sufficient clinical exposure within the chosen scope of practice.<sup>3</sup>
- A review of the ten programs accredited by the Canadian Athletic Therapist Association identifies a practicum requirement ranging from 720–1,200 hours of supervised clinical experience depending on the program.<sup>4</sup>
- Similarly, certification pathways for Pedorthists require practicum of 1,120 hours of supervised practice.<sup>5</sup>

## Regulatory Support for CMTCA Accreditation Standards

Regulatory recognition of CMTCA accreditation reinforces the profession's commitment to core competencies through consistent national standards. By aligning with CMTCA, the provincial regulators demonstrate a shared commitment to ensuring quality education and safe, ethical practice. All five provincial regulators formally recognize and support CMTCA as the accrediting body for massage therapy education in Canada.<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

## Commitment to Excellence and Public Protection

CMTCA remains committed to promoting high-quality education and ensuring that graduates of massage therapy programs are equipped to meet the demands of professional practice across Canada. The 330-hour requirement is a measured, nationally informed standard that supports protection of the public and upholds the integrity of the profession.

## Future Review of the Standard

The 330-hour requirement and its definition will remain in place until the next comprehensive, nation-wide review of the Accreditation Standards. This process will again involve consultation with key interested parties across the massage therapy profession, including regulators, associations, educators, practitioners, and education programs.

We continue to welcome respectful dialogue and collaboration with programs across the country and appreciate all efforts to support excellence in massage therapy education.

## References

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2. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2012). *Essential competency profile for occupational therapists in Canada*. <https://www.caot.ca>
3. Physiotherapy Education Accreditation (PEAC), & Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). (2020, November). *Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant education accreditation program handbook*. [https://www.otapta.ca/pdfs/Resources/Accreditation%20Handbooks/OTAPTA%20EAP%20Program%20Handbook%20\(current\).pdf](https://www.otapta.ca/pdfs/Resources/Accreditation%20Handbooks/OTAPTA%20EAP%20Program%20Handbook%20(current).pdf)
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6. College of Complimentary Health Professional of BC (CCHPBC). (2025). *Applicants From Recognized Education Programs - What is a recognized education program?* <https://cchpbc.ca/for-professionals/registered-massage-therapists/applicants/#recognized>
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8. Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation. (2024). *Standards for accreditation of massage therapy education programs in Canada*. <https://www.cmtca.ca>
9. Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada. (2016). *Inter-jurisdictional practice competencies and performance indicators for massage therapists at entry-to-practice*. <https://www.fomtrac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FOMTRAC-PCs-PIs-September-2016.pdf>