

*Inspiring excellence*

Canadian Massage Therapy  
Council for Accreditation  
(CMTCA)

# Annual Report 2019



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## Message from the Board Chair and the Executive Director

Welcome to CMTCA's 2019 annual report. We saw many successes in the past year. We granted Preliminary Accreditation to five education programs and accredited four others. And we expanded our staff team to enable us to provide more support to education programs and surveyors, and continue to spread the word about the value of accreditation and quality improvement in massage therapy education.



*Iain Robertson  
Board Chair*

However, there was one overriding issue that needed a great deal of time and effort. The board made the difficult decision, in the interest of fairness, to suspend accreditation services in provinces where the regulator, or, in non-regulated provinces, the massage therapy association(s), were not fulfilling their commitment to support CMTCA financially. The result was that services were suspended in all of the non-regulated provinces and also in the regulated province of British Columbia. This meant that many massage therapy education programs in Canada no longer had access to CMTCA's rigorous standards or accreditation process, and lost the benefit of having our experienced survey teams guide their quality improvement efforts.



*Kathrina Loeffler  
Executive Director*

The board did not take this decision lightly, particularly given CMTCA's ongoing commitment to a pan-Canadian accreditation process. Despite extensive consultation and discussion over a number of months, in the end this decision was unavoidable if CMTCA was to address the issue of some provinces—and their members—carrying a disproportionate share of the financial burden.

We are pleased to report, however, that continued dialogue with British Columbia led to a fruitful conclusion, with accreditation services being reinstated in that province as of January 2020. In addition, our supporting regulators signed three-year agreements to provide financial support to CMTCA, leading to more stability and sustainability and helping to solidify the gains that have been made to entrench accreditation for massage therapy education programs in Canada.

Through it all, our commitment to the intrinsic value of inspiring excellence through accreditation has never wavered. We continue to accredit education programs and develop supporting resources and services. And we firmly believe that our accreditation services are raising the profile of the massage therapy profession as a whole, benefitting students as well as the public who want to have confidence in the massage therapy health care they receive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain Robertson'.

Iain Robertson, Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Loeffler'.

Kathrina Loeffler, Executive Director

## Board update

Highlights of the CMTCA Board of Director's activities in 2019 include:

- Overseeing the process to achieve fair and equitable financial sustainability, which included suspending accreditation services in some provinces
- Reviewing Preliminary Accreditation and site visit recommendation reports and issuing accreditation decisions
- Granting Preliminary Accreditation to five education programs
- Accrediting four education programs
- Directing and supporting stakeholder engagement, resulting in meetings with and presentations to the Canadian Council of Massage Therapy Schools; Career Colleges Ontario; College of Massage Therapists of Ontario; education programs in Manitoba and the Manitoba associations responsible for massage therapists (Remedial Massage Therapists Society of Manitoba, Massage Therapists Association of Manitoba, Natural Health Practitioners of Canada, and the Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Association)

[Meet our board](#)



*Photo Credit: Olivia Hutcherson, unsplash.com*

## From Concept to Reality: Vision 2020

This is our final update on our three-year strategic plan, *From Concept to Reality: Vision 2020*, which runs to the end of 2020. We are beginning to think about our next plan already; if you have ideas on what CMTCA's focus and priorities should be for the next few years, please let us know at [info@cmtca.ca](mailto:info@cmtca.ca). The Board would welcome your input!

### *Strategic focus 2017–2020*

By 2020, our focus is on becoming an independent and effective accrediting body that is recognized by our many stakeholders as offering a sought-after accreditation process that strengthens and improves the quality of massage therapy education across the country.

To achieve this, our three areas of strategic focus are:

- A. **Independence:** Update and strengthen CMTCA's role as an independent accrediting body.
- B. **Sustainability:** Operate under a sustainable funding model.
- C. **Accreditation:** Strengthen education and support services to facilitate successful accreditation.

We will ...

- Promote continuous quality improvement and best practices in massage therapy education through accreditation.
- Ensure every massage therapy student in Canada has access to a CMTCA-accredited program.
- Improve the profession of massage therapy through accreditation.
- Be a recognized accreditor—the public stamp of approval—that sets the gold standard for massage therapy education in Canada.

As a result ...

- High-quality and consistent massage therapy education is available across Canada.
- Graduates of CMTCA-accredited programs are trained to be caring, committed, and competent, and they enter the profession ready to provide professional, quality health services.
- The public understands the contribution of massage therapy to health care.

### Our vision:

*Inspiring excellence in  
massage therapy  
education*

### Our mission:

The Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation (CMTCA) is the independent body that accredits massage therapy education programs across Canada. CMTCA sets standards for massage therapy education and supports organizations to achieve and maintain program accreditation.

## Goals and status

**Independence:** Update and strengthen CMTCA's role as an independent accrediting body

	Objective	Status
Short-term (2017)	Revise bylaws and governance model so as to function as an independent accrediting body	Complete
Medium-term (2018-2019)	Implement a policy governance model	Complete
Long-term (2020)	CMTCA functions as an independent accrediting body	Complete

**Sustainability:** Operate under a sustainable funding model

	Objective	Status
Short-term (2017)	Annual funding from CMTA member associations in non-regulated provinces and regulators in regulated provinces, based on 2015 fee of \$22/member	Complete
Medium-term (2018-2019)	Hybrid funding based on education programs paying full cost of accreditation with sponsorship support from massage therapy associations and regulators at \$22/member	Modified to continue with the shared model to ensure ongoing sustainability.
Long-term (2020)	Sustainable funding based on education programs paying full cost of accreditation with contributions from other stakeholders including massage therapy associations and regulators, at a rate to be determined	Modified to have regulators and associations share the cost for the next three years and perhaps longer, to share the financial costs equitably.

**Accreditation:** Strengthen education and support services to facilitate successful accreditation

	Objective	Status
Short-term (2017)	Provide education so education programs and surveyors understand the accreditation process and programs are able to develop in-house expertise on accreditation requirements	Complete and ongoing
Medium-term (2018-2019)	Strengthen education and support services to facilitate successful accreditation	Complete and ongoing
Long-term (2020)	Education programs understand accreditation requirements and have embedded the principles of quality improvement	Ongoing

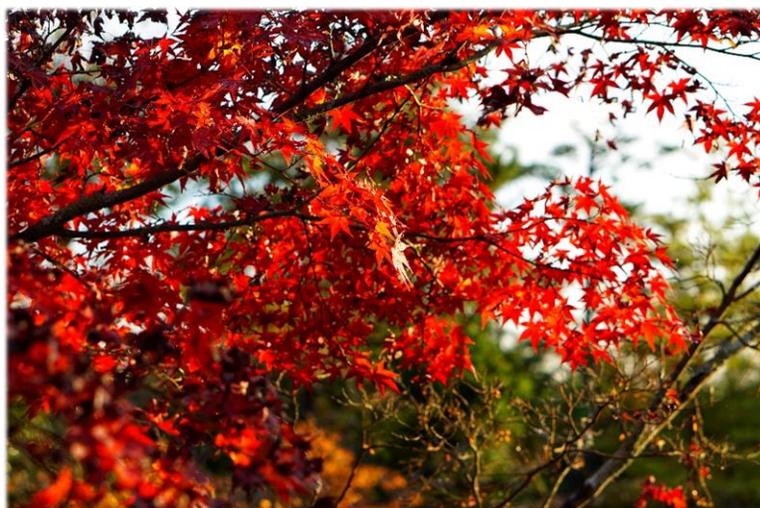


Photo Credit: Omar Sonido, unsplash.com

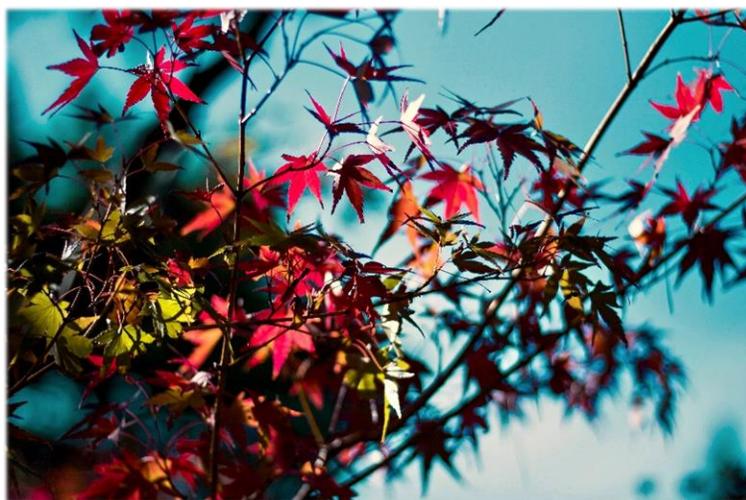
## Sustainable funding

2019 began with some difficult decisions that were necessary to secure regular long-term funding to support the sustainability of CMTCA. Accreditation services were suspended in provinces where the representative provincial association(s) or regulator was unable to provide financial support to CMTCA. This meant that, as of the end of 2019, CMTCA was providing accreditation services to massage therapy education programs in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

But there is some good news. Applications for accreditation that were opened before the suspension date have been honoured and CMTCA is pleased to still be providing accreditation services to some education programs in non-contributing provinces. This helps us live up to our commitment to those individual education programs that are committed to becoming accredited with us.

The suspension of our accreditation services posed a particular challenge to programs in British Columbia, where accreditation of massage therapy education programs is mandated. Some BC programs were particularly affected as they had already been accredited by CMTCA. Fortunately, discussions with the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia continued and were able to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement to once again provide accreditation services in that province as of January 2020.

While the entire process was challenging, it ultimately led to regulators in four provinces signing a multi-year funding agreement where they have committed to financially support CMTCA for the next three years.



*Photo Credit: Jelleke VanOoteg, unsplash.com*

## The accreditation process by the numbers

In 2019, CMTCA received 36 new applications and conducted four site visits and six Preliminary Accreditation reviews.

We also granted Preliminary Accreditation to five programs and accredited four programs.

### Applications by province (as of December 2019)

ACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS			
Province	Existing programs	New programs	TOTAL
British Columbia	5	3	8
Alberta	7	7	14
Saskatchewan	–	1	1
Ontario	33	7	40
Nova Scotia	1	–	1
Manitoba	1	–	1
New Brunswick	3	–	3
Quebec	1	–	1
TOTAL	51	18	69

### Surveyors and certified advisors by province (as of December 2019)

Province	Surveyors	Certified Advisors
British Columbia	7	2
Alberta	8	3
Manitoba	1	–
Ontario	23	7
New Brunswick	1	–
Newfoundland & Labrador	1	–
TOTAL	41	12

## *Preliminary Accreditation results*

Of the six Preliminary Accreditation submissions, five were granted Preliminary Accreditation.

## *Accredited programs*

We extend our sincere congratulations to the staff and students of the following accredited programs on their stellar achievement.

- Humber College
- Georgian College
- Canadian College of Massage and Hydrotherapy - Toronto Campus
- Canadian College of Massage and Hydrotherapy - Cambridge Campus



*Photo credit: Atul Vinayak, unsplash.com*

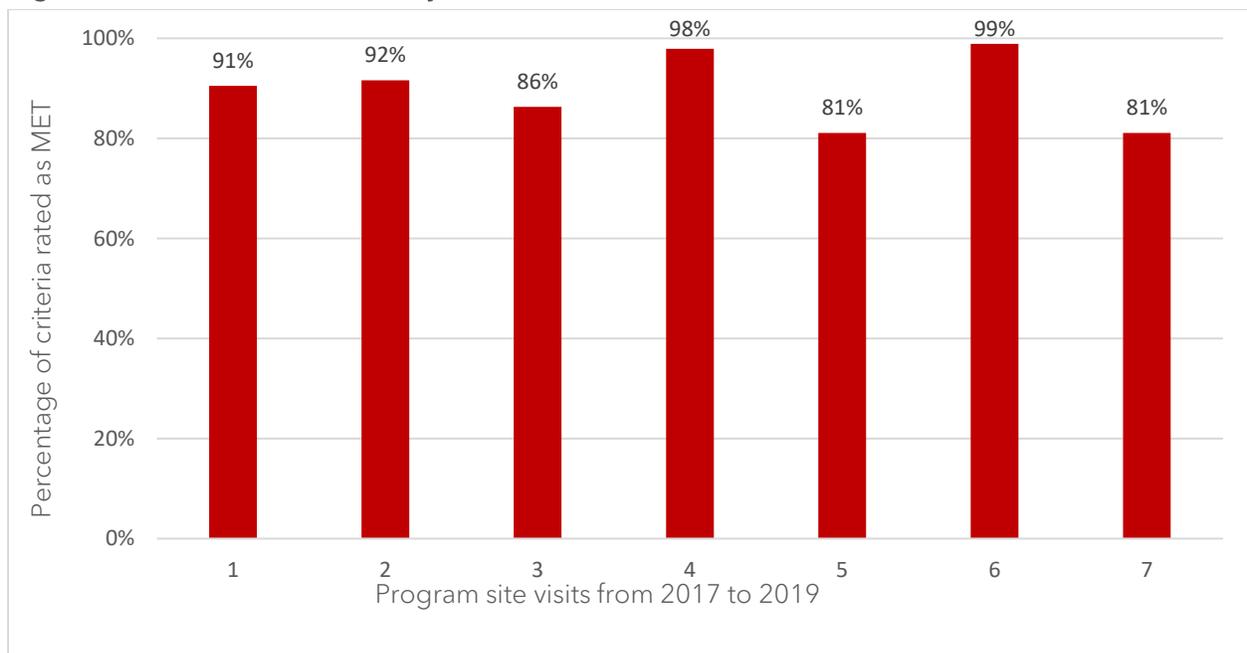
## Analysis of accreditation results

Monitoring and analyzing accreditation results helps CMTCA identify trends and issues and look for ways to continue to improve our support to education programs.

### Site visit results

As seen in Figure 1, our analysis of results from the seven site visits conducted from 2017 to 2019 shows that the percentage of criteria rated as met ranged from 81% to 99%, with an average of 89.6%. This encouraging result highlights education programs' strong compliance with the standards as a whole.

Figure 1: Criteria rated as met by site visit (2017 to 2019)



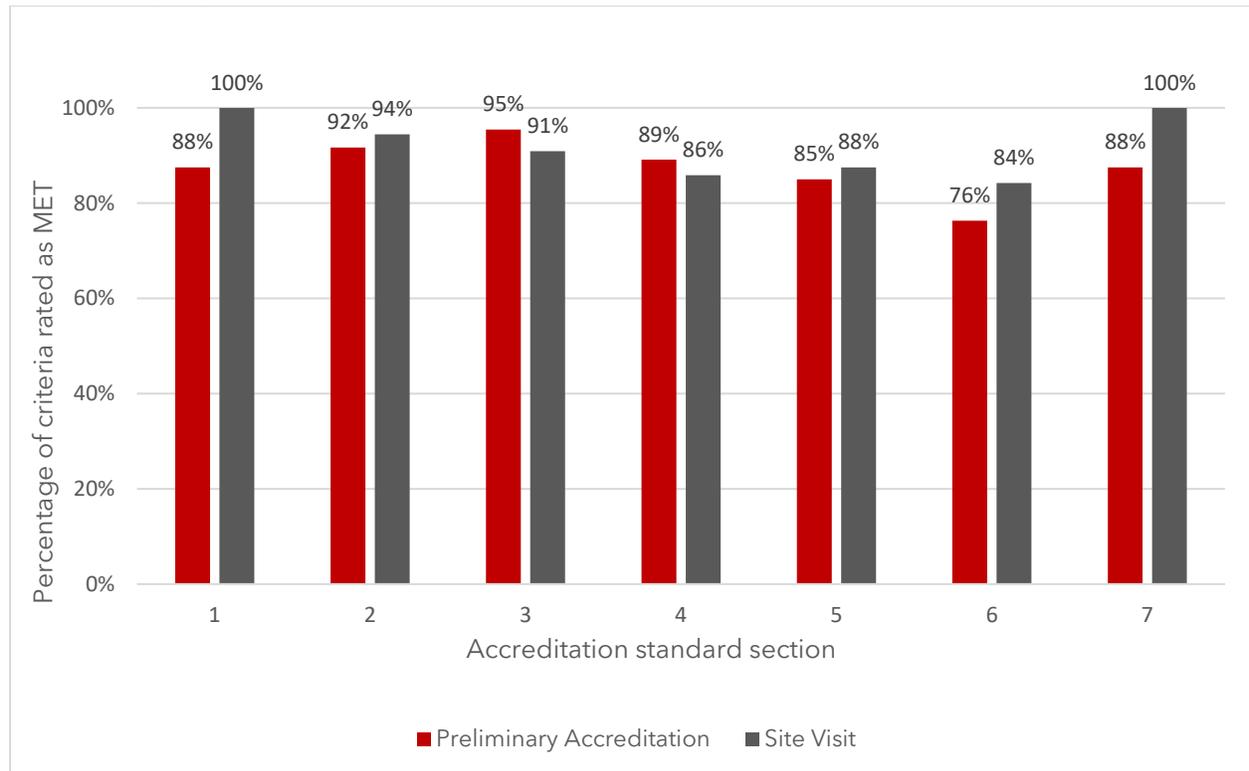
The following three criteria were most often rated as partially met for the seven site visits.

- **Criterion 2.5:** Minimum student/faculty ratios for different education settings (i.e., academic, simulated, clinical) are in place and adhered to, and there is a written rationale for the ratios.
- **Criterion 4.18:** A faculty or staff member with current Standard First Aid and CPR Level HCP certification is in the facility when students or patients/clients are present.
- **Criterion 5.7:** An ethics framework to help faculty and staff resolve ethical dilemmas is in place and used.

## Comparison of Preliminary Accreditation and site visit results

The data in Figure 2 are drawn from four education programs that underwent Preliminary Accreditation and subsequently had a site visit.

Figure 2: Comparison of Preliminary Accreditation and site visit results for four selected education programs (2017 to 2019)



The following observations can be made based on the findings in Figure 2:

- Across the seven standards, the met compliance for Preliminary Accreditation ranged from 76% to 95%, whereas for site visits it ranged from 84% to 100%.
- On average, the met ratings improved from 88% for Preliminary Accreditation to 92% for site visits
- Standard 1, 6, and 7 showed an 8 to 12% improvement in met compliance from the Preliminary Accreditation to the site visits. In particular, Standards 1 and 7 achieved 100% compliance during the site visits.
- Standards 2 and 5 showed 2 to 3% improvement in met compliance from the Preliminary Accreditation to the site visits.
- Standards 3 and 4 showed a decrease of 3 and 4%. However, they both remain above the 85% met compliance level. This slight decrease may suggest that these standards are dependent on in-person (i.e., site visit) verification of compliance.

## Preliminary Accreditation results (2019)

Six programs underwent Preliminary Accreditation in 2019. As shown in Figure 3, 70% of criteria were rated as met, 25% were rated as partially met, and 5% were rated as unmet.

Figure 3: Overall compliance results for Preliminary Accreditation

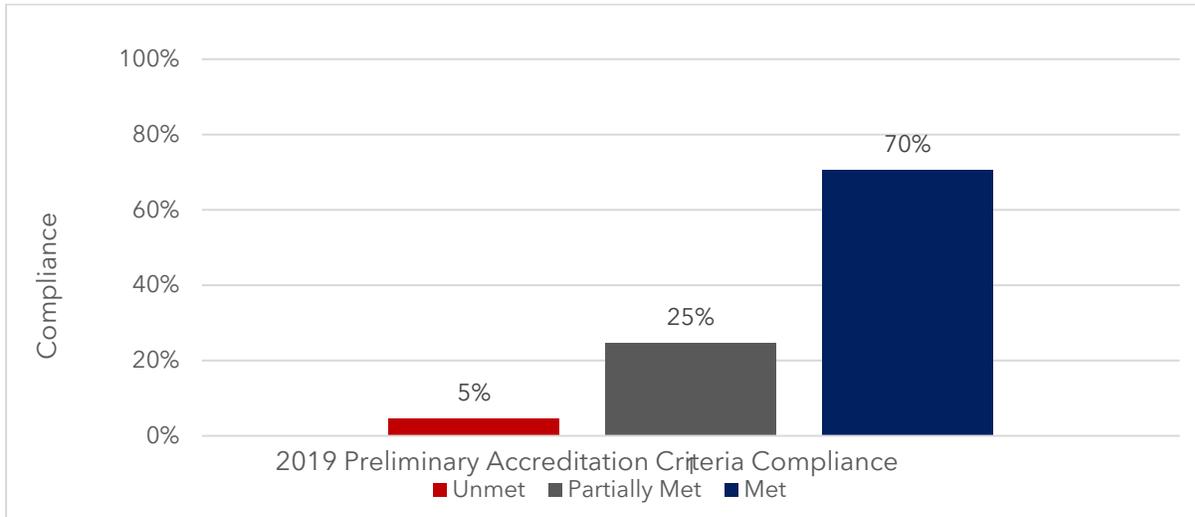
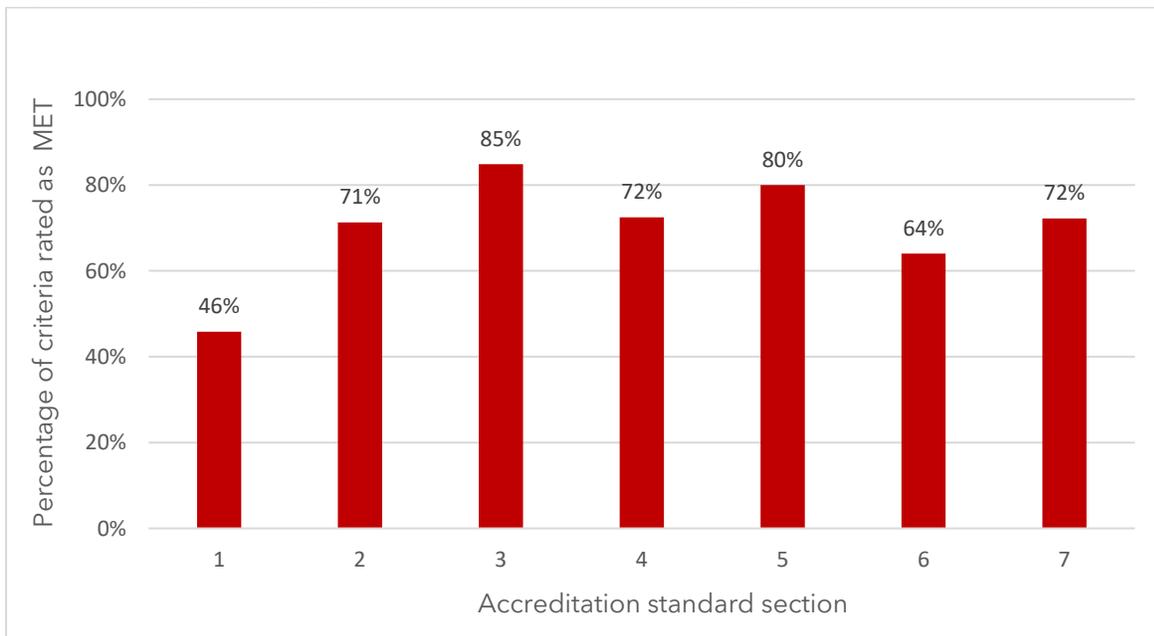


Figure 4 shows another perspective on these Preliminary Accreditation data.

Standard 3: Student Support and Standard 5: Human Resources, had the highest percentage of criteria rated as met.

Standard 1: Curriculum Content, had the lowest percentage of criteria rated as met, at 46%.

Figure 4: Compliance by standard section for Preliminary Accreditation



## A closer look at Standard 1 and criterion 1.1

Standard 1: Curriculum Content, and particularly criterion 1.1, are first for a reason, as they are a crucial part of the accreditation process. Meeting the requirements of this section is critical to accreditation success, and so we thought we'd give it some special attention.

### **Standard 1**

Standard 1 is specifically addressed in the CMTCA decision guidelines, which lay out how an accreditation decision is reached. As stipulated in the CMTCA decision-making framework, all of the criteria in Standard 1 must be rated as met or partially met for an education program to be accredited.

To achieve three- or five-year accreditation, an education program must meet all of the criteria in Standard 1. To achieve one-year accreditation, it must meet or partially meet all of the criteria in Standard 1. If it does not meet even one criterion in Standard 1, it will not be accredited. This rule stands regardless of how well the program does on the rest of the criteria in the standards.

### **Criterion 1.1**

The practice competencies and performance indicators in the most recent version of the [\*Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice\*](#) are embedded throughout the curriculum and are evident in student learning outcomes.

Criterion 1.1 was rated as unmet for 50% of the education programs undergoing Preliminary Accreditation in 2019.

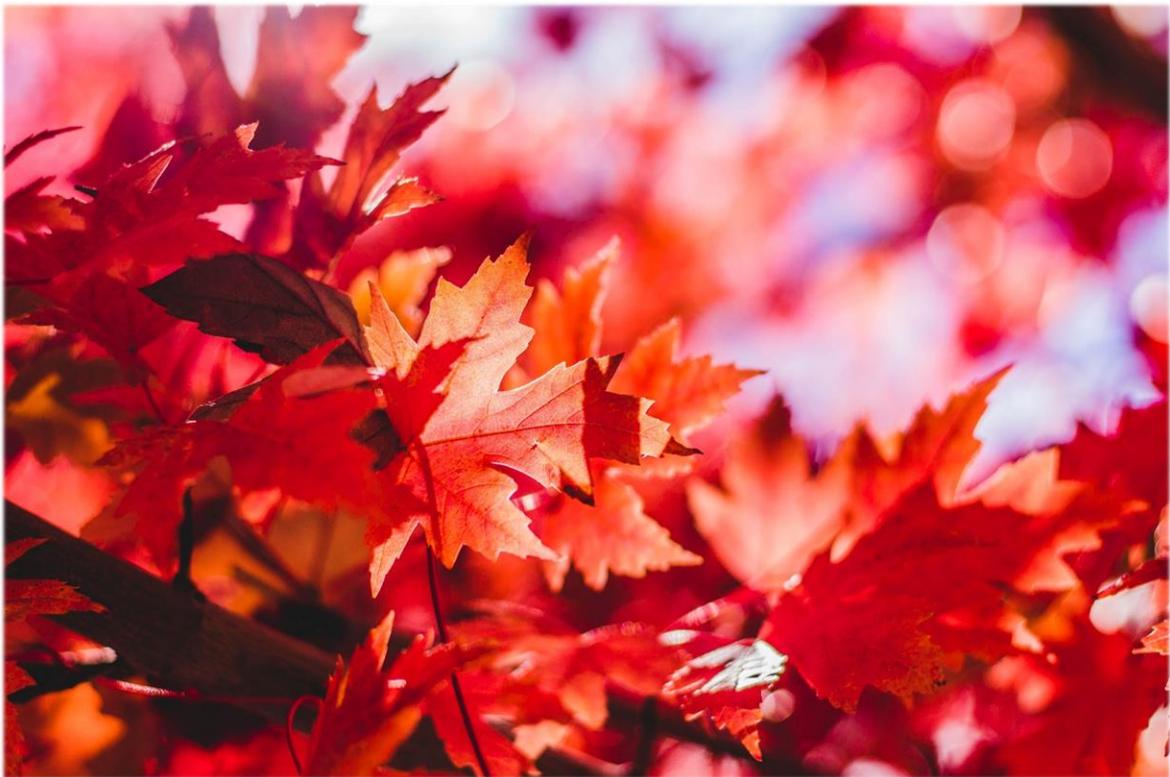
This criterion addresses the need for the program to embed into its curriculum the practice competencies and performance indicators in the most recent version of the [\*Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice\*](#), and ensure the PCs/Pis are evident in student learning outcomes. We provide a helpful worksheet that allows the education program to map how it has embedded the PCs/Pis and identify where it needs to do more work in that regard.

To determine if the education program has met criterion 1.1, CMTCA surveyors review in great detail all evidence—electronically for Preliminary Accreditation and in person during the site visit—to ensure the PCs/Pis are adequately embedded, taught, and assessed in a way that ensures that students graduate ready to practice their profession in the real world. To help education programs meet this criterion, CMTCA has developed an online presentation that helps them showcase the quality of their program.

Achieving the requirements of criterion 1.1 is not easy, and we make sure all of our education programs are aware of this right up front. Particularly for the first accreditation cycle, it can take up to a year or more to put the requirements in place and gather the supporting evidence.

# Financial statements

## CMTCA Audited Financial Statements 2019



*Photo Credit: Jeremy Thomas, unsplash.com*

## Looking ahead

Now that CMTCA is in a more stable financial position, in 2020 we will be turning our attention to developing a new strategic plan that will come into effect for 2021. We would welcome your input—please email [info@cmtca.ca](mailto:info@cmtca.ca) to provide your comments and ideas about what we should keep doing, stop doing, or start doing.

We will also be expanding our e-learning modules to provide more virtual support to education programs and surveyors. And, of course, we will continue to train surveyors, grant Preliminary Accreditation, and accredit education programs.

The CMTCA Board and staff extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who was involved in helping us grow in 2019, and we look forward to greater success in 2020.

### We're here to help

CMTCA encourages anyone who is interested in accreditation, quality improvement, or raising the profile of massage therapy education and massage therapy in general to call us at any time.

We support our education programs and surveyors in many ways, including interpreting the standards and helping them navigate CMCTAu and work through technical issues. We take these roles very seriously and they are a key part of what we do every day.

Let's talk quality improvement!