



Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation

Inspiring excellence: **Annual Report 2018**



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Message from the **Board Chair** and the **Executive Director**

On behalf of the board and staff of the Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation, we are pleased to say a few words to open CMTCA's first annual report.

The CMTCA standards and accreditation process were released in April 2017, after 16 months of development and consultation across the country. That makes 2018 our first full year in operation. We can honestly say it both lived up to and challenged our expectations.

Since the public release, we have hit a multitude of milestones. We recruited and trained 41 surveyors and 12 certified advisors and processed 42 applications for accreditation from education programs in 7 provinces, all of which are now in various stages of their accreditation journeys. It has been exciting to see the accreditation process ramp up, both in terms of recruiting and training surveyors and as education programs continue to apply for accreditation.

That's the upside. Our main challenge? Sustainable funding. As 2018 drew to a close, it became increasingly clear that our funding model had to change, as some provinces—and their members—were carrying a disproportionate share of the financial burden. This will be a key issue that board and staff, in collaboration with CMTCA stakeholders, will be working hard to resolve as quickly as possible in 2019.

Everyone at CMTCA is unwaveringly and enthusiastically supportive of all things accreditation, and believes in the intrinsic value of striving to improve quality and safety by meeting recognized standards of excellence. We know the education programs are learning this too. But the real beneficiaries are the students, the profession as a whole, and ultimately the public who seek and deserve safe, ethical, competent massage therapy. CMTCA is proud to be an integral part of making that happen.

Sincerely,



Iain Robertson, Board Chair



Kathrina Loeffler, Executive Director

Board Update

The CMTCA board kept busy overseeing and supporting the accreditation process throughout the year. Highlights of board activities included:

- Reviewing 8 reports on accreditation recommendations to make sound accreditation decisions
- Participating in 7 decision making meetings to approve accreditation decisions
- Accrediting two education programs (2018)
- Approving the development of the certified advisor program to support education programs in the accreditation process
- Reviewing and revising the bylaws to be able to function as an independent accrediting body
- Reviewing the nominations process to ensure that it supports the strategic goal of independence and sustainability
- Directing and supporting stakeholder engagement which resulted in presentations to the Canadian Council of Massage Therapy Schools, Career Colleges Ontario, the Heads of Health Sciences of Ontario's public colleges, the coordinators of Ontario's public college massage therapy programs (the Massage Therapy Subcommittee), the College of Massage Therapists of New Brunswick, and the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario
- Conducting a full review of the CMTCA governance policy manual to ensure strong governance following a policy governance model
- Conducting cost analysis for education programs with regard to the accreditation process
- Directing the development of a multi-year agreement to secure sustainable funding
- Posting financial statements to increase transparency

Meet our board

From Concept to Reality: **Vision 2020**

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*

From **Concept to Reality: Vision 2020** lays out our goals and objectives to 2020. We are approximately halfway through this four-year strategic plan and have had some notable successes and a few modifications.

Strategic focus 2017–2020

By 2020, we will be 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.

Goals and status

As of December 2018

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	In progress, completion expected early in 2019
Medium-term (2018-2019)	Implement a policy governance model	In progress, completion expected early in 2019
Long-term (2020)	CMTCA functions as an independent accrediting body	Ongoing

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: Still a shared model because not enough education programs are involved in the accreditation process to ensure 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: Regulators and associations will share the cost for the next three years and perhaps longer to ensure that education programs do not bear the full cost of accreditation.

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	Advisors are trained to provide support but education programs pay for this service. Making more education available on CMTCAu is planned, as is a client manual.
Long-term (2020)	Education programs understand accreditation requirements and have embedded the principles of quality improvement	Ongoing

CMTCA accomplishments: **Look how far we've come**

Looking back, it turns out a lot of work goes into developing an accreditation process from scratch. Here's a summary of our accomplishments to date. For those who want more than a summary, we've also broken them into much more detail [here](#).

Getting started

As we got started in 2015, our first tasks were to establish our organizational and board infrastructure, including staffing the office and developing plans, policies, and procedures.

Beyond that, our focus was on developing the standards and the accreditation process, a monumental task that ran to April 2017 when they were released publicly. We convened a Standards Advisory Committee for support and oversight, researched standards from other programs and integrated their best practices, drafted and refined the standards to integrate our research and ongoing feedback from across the country, and developed the accreditation process and decision-making framework that we piloted at eight massage therapy education programs.

P.S. Thanks again to MH Vicars School of Massage Therapy (two sites in Alberta), Wellington College of Remedial Massage Therapies (Manitoba), Robertson College Massage Therapy Program (Manitoba), Georgian College Massage Therapy Program (Ontario), Westervelt College Massage Therapy Program (Ontario), Atlantic College of Therapeutic Massage (New Brunswick), and Academy Canada Massage Therapy Program (Newfoundland and Labrador).

Our survey team

At the same time, we were building our survey team, because a great accreditation process needs great surveyors to put it into action. We developed policies and procedures, a competency framework, a marketing and recruitment plan, an in-depth five-day training program, and a performance management system so trainees and active surveyors could receive ongoing feedback and support.

Accreditation in action

Once the accreditation process was launched, we geared up to manage it. As the applications started to come in, we scheduled Preliminary Accreditation reviews and assigned surveyors, monitored the quality of the reviews, provided support and feedback to surveyors, collated results, produced reports and recommendations to the board, produced letters and accreditation reports with the accreditation decision, and followed up as necessary. We did the same for the site visits that flowed from the Preliminary Accreditation reviews. In addition to the above, this included scheduling; logistics; preparation; attendance at the site visits to ensure consistent interpretation and conduct; and contacting the regulator, association, or Ministry of Education as needed.

As we moved into 2018, we also updated our training materials and curriculum on CMTCAu and our learning management system that is available to clients and surveyors, provided in-depth theoretical training on quality improvement to our surveyors, and produced a surveyor handbook.

New in 2018: Certified advisors

We started training certified advisors to give education programs access to an additional and credible source of information and support, such as an in-depth review of their preparations or an analysis of their supporting evidence. There is a cost for certified advisors, and using one does not guarantee a program will be accredited, as advisor services are separate from CMTCA.

A list of certified advisors can be found at [**www.cmtca.ca/advisors**](http://www.cmtca.ca/advisors).

Keeping it going

We tracked our accreditation results and evaluations to monitor trends and developed supporting materials when gaps were identified, such as strengthening how the practice competencies and performance indicators are embedded into the curriculum (criterion 1.1). We analyzed Preliminary Accreditation turnaround times and frequent unmet or misinterpreted criteria.

We created a website, kept stakeholders informed through newsletters, and attended meetings and conferences to spread the word about the accreditation process.

Finally, funding. Stay tuned ...

So that was 2018. We invite you to keep up with all of our new developments through our website.

The accreditation process by the numbers

Applications by province (2017 and 2018)

ACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS

Province	Existing program	New program	TOTAL
British Columbia	3	3	6
Alberta	3	7	10
Saskatchewan	--	1	1
Ontario	20	4	24
Quebec	1	--	1
TOTAL	27	15	42

Surveyors and certified advisors by province (2017 and 2018)

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

In 2018, 23 candidates attended the surveyor training workshop that was held in April.

Preliminary Accreditation results

Of the 10 Preliminary Accreditation submissions, 60 percent were granted Preliminary Accreditation. Of those, 20 percent of new program applicants were granted Preliminary Accreditation, and 100 percent of existing program applicants were granted Preliminary Accreditation.

Accredited programs (2017 and 2018)

We take this opportunity to once again extend our sincere congratulations to the staff and students of these programs on their stellar achievement.

2018

Humber College—Advanced Diploma Massage Therapy Program (Ontario)

Vancouver Career College, Burnaby Campus—Registered Massage Therapy Program (British Columbia)

2017

Okanagan Valley College of Massage Therapy—Massage Therapy Diploma Program (British Columbia)

A closer look at **Preliminary Accreditation**

As this is our first annual report, we thought it would be worthwhile to shine a spotlight on Preliminary Accreditation—since it is the first step in the accreditation process.

From submission to decision

Once an education program has applied for accreditation, it prepares for and undergoes Preliminary Accreditation as the first step on its accreditation journey. Depending on the results, a site visit follows. The entire process, from application to the final accreditation decision, can be long and intense.

CMTCA works hard to maintain a fast turnaround time for Preliminary Accreditation decisions. We know that education programs are anxious about the result, and receiving their decision quickly helps maintain enthusiasm and momentum. At CMTCA, the average time from when an education program uploads its Preliminary Accreditation submission to receiving its decision is about seven weeks—less than two months!

But we pack a lot into that time. First, CMTCA staff review the submission to ensure it is complete and well structured, after which it is assigned to three surveyors who have approximately two weeks to conduct independent reviews and send their results to CMTCA. A report to the board is then created, and, at its monthly decision-making meeting, the board reviews the report and grants or denies Preliminary Accreditation. Finally, the report and the decision are sent to the education program, which acts on the results as part of preparing for the site visit, which is the next stage of accreditation.

Keep an eye on these criteria

As part of our data collection and analysis, CMTCA monitors accreditation results to identify overall trends and issues. As shown below, to date, Preliminary Accreditation evidence that tends to be missing or incomplete is related to formal interprofessional partnerships, student hours providing supervised massage therapy to the public, an independent advisory body, a health and safety committee, performance evaluation appeals, and infrastructure and resources.

These criteria were rated partially met or unmet in 60 percent of our Preliminary Accreditation reviews.

Criterion 1.5: Community collaborations and partnerships to increase interprofessional educational exposure and/or employment opportunities for students are developed and documented through formal agreements.

- Education programs must provide a rationale for selecting the partnerships and describe how the partnerships increase interprofessional educational exposure or employment opportunities. Programs also need to submit the formal partnership agreements.

Criterion 1.7: As part of graduation requirements, students are required to have provided a minimum of 330 hours of faculty-supervised massage therapy to the public.

- The 330 hours must be a graduation requirement as well as a course requirement. Education programs are required to show how they ensure that the 330 hours are made up of faculty-supervised massage therapy to the public.

Criterion 4.12: Advisory body membership includes, to the extent possible, education program faculty and/or staff, external massage therapy professionals, program graduates, and community representatives including business or industry leaders and prospective employers.

- Education programs are expected to demonstrate that the advisory body is separate from the program board or oversight body and that these bodies do not fulfil the same function. The programs are also expected to ensure diversity in the advisory body membership.

Criterion 4.20: A health and safety committee meets as required to manage and oversee health and safety issues, and minutes are documented.

- If an education program is just setting up a health and safety committee, or if its committee has been in place for fewer than six months, it is likely that this criterion will be rated as partially met. This may be avoided by ensuring that the committee has been active for more than six months before sending in the Preliminary Accreditation submission.

Criterion 5.5: Policies and procedures are in place and followed for faculty and staff to appeal the results of evaluations of their performance, including timelines to submit the appeal and for the education program to respond.

- Education programs are expected to provide a specific appeal policy that addresses faculty and staff evaluations.

Standard 6.0 Resources and Infrastructure

- Evidence for many of the criteria in Standard 6.0 is often limited or missing. CMTCA knows that for new programs, the evidence may not yet exist; however, it appeared that some programs may have decided that much of this section was “a given” and so did not provide the detail required. Without solid supporting evidence, it is difficult for surveyors to determine if the resources and infrastructure are safe.
- In the case of new programs where much of the actual resources and infrastructure may not yet be in place, CMTCA requires that detailed plans, processes, and explanations be submitted that show how the program will meet the criteria once the program opens.

Comprehensive Preliminary Accreditation submissions include a clear and detailed narrative stating the rationale for the rating of each and every criterion.

These criteria fare a little better

CMTCA’s analysis also found that there are criteria where education programs tend to do well. In fact, the following criteria were rated as met in 80 percent or more of the Preliminary Accreditation reviews.

- Criterion 2.13: Course and assessment materials
- Criterion 3.4: Counselling
- Criterion 3.5: Financial aid information
- Criterion 3.8: Student code of conduct
- Criterion 3.9: Student code of conduct violations
- Criterion 3.10: Ethical issues
- Criterion 3.11: Student dress code
- Criterion 4.5: Program administration
- Criterion 4.7: Organizational chart
- Criterion 7.5: Evaluation data

We’re here to help

CMTCA provides information about quality improvement and accreditation, and supports education programs and surveyors in myriad ways, including interpreting the standards and helping them navigate CMCTAu and work through technical issues. We take these roles very seriously; they are a big part of what we do every day.

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

[Audited Financial Statements 2018](#)



Looking ahead

In addition to our focus on securing sustainable funding in 2019, some of our other plans include recruiting a new board member, finalizing our governance policy manual, and providing more information and communication to our stakeholders to increase transparency. We will continue to support our client organizations by being available online and by phone, and by increasing our online offerings through CMTCAu.

And, of course, we plan to accredit even more education programs in the coming year.

Finally, we thank everyone who has shared this journey with us, for your belief in the process and your willingness to be part of positive change. As we move into 2019, we are ever mindful of the need to stay aware of why we do what we do. Accrediting massage therapy education programs benefits not only the students and the public, it also raises the profile of massage therapy as a respected, recognized health care profession. We are all working together to increase credibility, contribute to better regulation and standard practice, and build quality, and that keeps us going strong.