

Registered Massage Therapist Registration Requirements: Supporting the Public Interest and Competent Practice

The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario's Public Interest Mandate

The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) is the regulatory body for Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) in Ontario. CMTO is dedicated to excellence in protecting the public interest and working to ensure that its registrants, RMTs, practise Massage Therapy in a safe, effective and ethical manner.

The *Regulated Health Professional Act, 1991 (RHPA, 1991)* and the *Massage Therapy Act, 1991* articulate the duties, responsibilities and regulatory authority of CMTO. This includes developing and maintaining both standards of qualification, for those who apply for Certificates of Registration, as well as standards of professional practice and professional ethics for registrants.

Registration Requirements to Become a Registered Massage Therapist

The registration regulation under the *Massage Therapy Act, 1991* outlines the requirements that must be met to become an RMT in this province. The Ontario government enshrined these requirements in legislation to ensure that the public interest guides registration decisions. The RMT registration requirements include the following:

1. Academic requirement: Obtaining a diploma in Massage Therapy from:
 - (a) A private vocational school in Ontario or a College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario;
 - (b) An educational institution outside of Ontario equivalent to the Ontario programs; or
 - (c) Qualification from outside Canada considered to be substantially similar to qualification in clause (a);

2. Exam requirement: Successful completion of the certification examinations;
3. Proof of professional liability insurance coverage;
4. Good character;
5. Canadian citizenship, permanent resident status or valid work permit;
6. Language requirement: Reasonable fluency in English or French.

Inter-Jurisdictional Competency Standards

The [Inter-Jurisdictional Competency Standards \(IJCS\)](#) is an outcomes-based document that describes the competencies that an applicant must have upon entering the Massage Therapy profession. The goal of this is to ensure applicants' ability to practice in a safe, effective and ethical manner. This document includes both practice competencies and performance indicators.

A practice competency is a description of a task that is performed in practice and can be carried out to a specified level of proficiency. The practice competencies are interdependent; they are not intended to be applied in isolation.

The performance indicators describe how proficiency in the practice competencies is to be assessed at entry-to-practice. The indicators are intended to describe realistic performance expectations, consistent with the requirements of entry-level proficiency.

All Canadian provinces where Massage Therapy is a regulated profession (British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Newfoundland) have adopted the IJCS. In Ontario, approved Massage Therapy education providers incorporated the IJCS into their curriculum in 2013. CMTO's Certification Examinations – both the Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) and the Objectively Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) – have been based on the IJCS since 2015.

Connecting the Registration Requirements, the Public Interest and Practice Competencies

The table on the next page demonstrates how the registration requirements, noted above, support CMTO's public interest mandate, as well as how they relate to the competencies articulated in the IJCS.

Registration Requirement	How does this requirement support CMTO's mandate to regulate in the public interest?	How is this requirement related to the practice competencies in the IJCS document?
Education	<p>A diploma in Massage Therapy from an approved Ontario education provider, or equivalent, ensures that applicants are taught the knowledge, skill and abilities they will need to practise in a safe, effective and ethical manner.</p>	<p>The curriculum of approved Massage Therapy educational training programs is derived from the IJCS. It is comprehensive and as such it is expected to cover all of the competencies articulated in the IJCS.</p> <p>It is important to note that the IJCS is an outcomes-based document. Massage Therapy applies principles of physical, health and social sciences as well as the humanities. While there is no specific reference to a list of required courses or minimum hours of education, the application of foundational knowledge is embedded in the practice competencies and performance indicators.</p>
Certification Examinations	<p>There are two Certification Examinations: The Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) is designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge in the three competency areas of health science, professional development and clinical science.</p> <p>The Objectively Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) simulates a real-life clinical environment. It is designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge, application of skill, and ability to safely and effectively apply the principles and processes of Massage Therapy practise in different clinical scenarios.</p> <p>Together, the examinations evaluate a candidate's competence. Successful completion of the examinations</p>	<p>The Certification Examinations are based on the professional competencies and performance indicators articulated in the IJCS. These competencies form the foundation for safe, effective and ethical practise at the entry level and are accepted and used in all regulated jurisdictions in Canada.</p> <p>As noted above, while the IJCS does not reference required courses or minimum hours of education, the application of foundational knowledge is embedded in the practice competencies and performance indicators.</p>

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	means that the candidate was able to demonstrate competence at the entry-to-practice level required for safe Massage Therapy practise.	
Professional Liability Insurance	RMTs provide care and services to members of the public, and therefore they have some exposure to claims of liability. An RMT may not have the personal resources to pay for any damages that may be awarded against them in court. Professional liability insurance provides a source of protection and financial recourse for a client (member of the public) who may a negative health outcome as the result of an error or failure by the RMT in providing care.	
Good Character	<p>The 'good character' requirement is intended to ensure that only those individuals who will practise in a safe, ethical and professional manner are registered with the College.</p> <p>Applicants must demonstrate that their past and present conduct affords reasonable grounds for the belief that they will practise Massage Therapy with decency, honesty, integrity and in accordance with the law; that they do not have a condition or disorder that would negatively affect their ability to practise in a safe manner; and that they display an appropriately professional attitude.</p>	<p>The following sections of the IJCS touch on the elements of good character noted at left-hand column:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Practice <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate in a manner that respects diversity; • Communicate in a manner that is suitable to the recipient's understanding and background; • Establish and maintain inter-professional collaboration; and • Identify and address interpersonal conflict. 1.2 Professional Conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the following requirements: federal, provincial, regulatory, municipal and local; • Practise professionally, independent of personal beliefs;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote awareness of Massage Therapy as a regulated health profession; • Employ personal care and lifestyle strategies that enhance professional effectiveness; • Manage personal stress levels; • Employ critical thinking; • Use professional judgement; • Identify and address conflict of interest; • Practise in a manner that recognizes the role of Massage Therapy within the healthcare system; • Practice within the Registered Massage Therapist's knowledge and skill level; • Contribute to an effective, collaborative atmosphere in group settings; • Maintain currency with developments in the profession; and • Create comprehensive client records. <p>1.3 Therapeutic Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display positive regard toward client; • Maintain professional boundaries in relationship with client; • Respect client's physical privacy; • Comply with confidentiality and information privacy requirements; • Employ touch with a therapeutic intent; • Maintain informed client consent regarding assessment and treatment;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain special consent prior to assessment and treatment of sensitive body areas; • Recognize and address the power differential in the client-therapist relationship; and • Recognize and address transference and counter-transference.
Residency Status	This requirement ensures that only those individuals who are authorized to work in Canada are practicing as a Registered Massage Therapist.	
Language Fluency	<p>Applicants must be able to speak and write either French or English with reasonable fluency. It is imperative that a registrant is able to communicate effectively with their clients, their clients' representatives, other healthcare providers, etc.</p> <p>Registrants must also be able to communicate with the College to understand and comply with their regulatory responsibilities, including new/updated legislation, by-laws, policies and standards of practise. Effective communication is key to safe and competent practise.</p>	<p>In the practise of the profession, competencies requiring reasonable language fluency are as follows:</p> <p>1. Professional Practice</p> <p>1.1 Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use effective written, verbal and electronic communication; • Communicate in a manner that respects diversity; • Communicate in a manner that is suitable to the client's understanding and background; • Use active listening skills; • Contribute to an effective, collaborative atmosphere in group settings; • Use medical terminology; • Establish and maintain inter-professional collaboration; and • Identify and address interpersonal conflict. <p>1.2 Professional Conduct</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the following requirements: federal, provincial, regulatory, municipal and local; • Promote awareness of Massage Therapy as a regulated health profession; • Practise in a manner that recognizes the role of Massage Therapy within the healthcare system; • Access and, where relevant, use research and professional literature in Massage Therapy and related disciplines to enhance client care; • Maintain awareness and currency with developments in the profession; • Create comprehensive client records; • Employ sustainable business practices; • Perform billing procedures; and • Prepare reports for third parties. <p>1.3 Therapeutic Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display positive regard toward client; • Comply with confidentiality and information privacy requirements; • Maintain informed client consent regarding assessment and treatment; • Obtain special consent prior to assessment and treatment of sensitive body areas; • Address the power differential in the client-therapist relationship; and • Assist client in representing their needs to others.

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		<p>2. <u>Assessment and Treatment Planning</u></p> <p>2.1 Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain comprehensive case history from client; • Integrate findings of other healthcare practitioners; • Explain the approach to assessment and describe the process; • Recognize conditions requiring medical attention and advise accordingly; • Interpret findings and formulate clinical impression; • Refer client to other healthcare professionals when appropriate; and • Advise client of relevant community healthcare and social service resources. <p>2.2 Treatment Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate an evidence-informed approach in treatment planning; • Formulate individualized treatment plan based on assessment findings; and • Explain treatment planning. <p>2.3 Indications for Adjunctive Therapeutic Modalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the potential benefits of adjunctive therapeutic modalities. <p>3. <u>Treatment and Client Self Care</u></p>

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		<p>3.1 Treatment Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat in a manner that reflects the principles of Massage Therapy; • Maintain a safe and comfortable treatment environment; • Apply standard hygiene and infection control precautions; • Use client transfer techniques; • Assist client with dressing and undressing as needed; • Apply draping as relevant; and • Advise and instruct client on self-care. <p>3.2 Modalities and Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the purpose, effects and outcome of Massage Therapy techniques.