



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Director

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MEMORANDUM

TO: SCHEV Certified Massage Therapy Schools

FROM: Sandra Freeman, Director of Private Postsecondary Education

DATE: June 4, 2025

SUBJECT: New Massage Therapy Program Standards and Requirements

As the agency responsible for regulating postsecondary education in Virginia, SCHEV assumes responsibility for setting curriculum standards for massage therapy programs, as the Virginia Board of Nursing (VBoN) does not currently provide them. In fulfilling this role, SCHEV must ensure appropriate educational quality and student protections. To do so, we rely on curriculum standards established by nationally recognized professional organizations with subject-matter expertise in the field. The guidance outlined in this memo reflects that commitment and establishes the framework that massage therapy programs must follow moving forward. Please review and ensure compliance with the following standards:

1. Program Length

- SCHEV will approve 500-hour and 625-hour programs.
 - a. Programs exceeding these hours must be reduced.
 - b. Schools may offer either program or both.
 - c. For the 625-hour program, schools must disclose in their catalog and enrollment agreement that Virginia only requires 500 hours for licensure.

2. Distance Education (DE)

- A portion of the program may be delivered via distance education, subject to SCHEV review of the Learning Management System (LMS) prior to approval.
 - a. Eligible didactic courses for asynchronous distance education include: Anatomy and Physiology, Business, Ethics, etc.
 - b. A maximum percentage of the program can be delivered through distance education, based on the program length.

3. Standards of Training

- SCHEV will use the following as curriculum standards:

500-Hour Standard (NCBTMB Curriculum)

- i. 125 hours Anatomy, Physiology, Kinesiology (can be DE)
- ii. 40 hours Pathology (can be DE)
- iii. 10 hours Business and Ethics (minimum 6 hrs. in ethics) (can be DE)
- iv. 200 hours hands-on, in-class, supervised instruction in massage and bodywork (must be face-to-face)
- v. 125 hours in a related field (face-to-face)
- vi. Distance Education (DE) limited to 35% of the total program

625-Hour Standard (ELAP Curriculum)

- i. 27 hours Massage Theory and Principles
- ii. 20 hours Massage Professional Practices
- iii. 40 hours The Therapeutic Relationship
- iv. 80 hours Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology
- v. 50 hours Assessment and Documentation
- vi. 175 hours Massage and Bodywork Application (face-to-face)
- vii. 71 hours Palpation and Movement (face-to-face)
- viii. 80 hours Adapting Sessions for Clients
- ix. 82 hours Career Development
- x. A minimum of 400 hours must be face-to-face instruction.
- xi. Up to 225 hours may be delivered through distance education (didactic courses only).

4. Implementation and Next Steps

- All schools must align their massage therapy programs with the standards outlined in this memo by **January 1, 2026**. Schools currently offering programs that exceed the approved 500-hour or 625-hour models will have until **December 31, 2025**, to teach out currently enrolled students. After this date, such programs must be deleted by submitting a formal request through the SCHEV portal. Additionally, schools may submit requests to add new massage therapy programs at any time using the same portal.

SCHEV appreciates your continued cooperation in upholding academic quality and student protection. If you have any questions regarding this guidance or the submission process, please contact the PPE section at ppe@schev.edu.