



Substantial Equivalency Process for Massage Therapists

May 2014



Substantial Equivalency Process

Purpose of Substantial Equivalency

To provide existing practitioners with an opportunity to best understand where they are at, in a professional context, in relation to the *Inter-jurisdictional Entry to Practice Competencies for Massage Therapists*. Through completion of the Substantial Equivalency Process, identification of areas in need of remediation will provide existing practitioners with the ability to pursue further education, training and/or experience that is relevant, tangible and meaningful when considering the objective of being able to actively demonstrate Entry to Practice Competence. Once remediation has been addressed, practitioners will be eligible for membership with the MTAA.

Components of Substantial Equivalency

The Substantial Equivalency Process is comprised of four (4) distinct, yet associated, sections for review as follows:

- 1) Self Assessment: Each applicant must complete a self-administered assessment, reflecting honestly upon individual ability to demonstrate entry to practice competencies associated with the practice of Massage Therapy.
- 2) Prior Learning Assessment: Each applicant must submit information relating to initial Massage Therapy education in addition to ongoing training and development completed throughout their career. This information is to include:
 - ***a program outline that includes what courses were offered and their length,***
 - ***detailed course outlines for each course offered/completed that includes learning objectives, topics and reference materials used***
 - ***copy of credential(s) awarded (i.e., diploma, certificate, etc.)***
- 3) Clinical Experience Evaluation: each applicant must submit information relating to recent clinical experience which when combined will provide evidence of direct, hands on, patient care. This information is to include:
 - ***a current curriculum vitae or resume: with dates, addresses and phone numbers of places of practice, detailing clinical experience, self-employment, training, professional development;***
 - ***copy of current First Aid (Standard) and CPR (Level C or higher) Certificates;***
 - ***letters of reference: totalling 3, authored by credible sources, submitted to the MTAA directly (please do not submit reference letters with your application); speaking to time in practice, nature of business and location of business;***
 - ***copies of patient treatment records, stripped of personal and identifying information, for three (3) separate patients over three (3) different calendar years;***
 - ***copy of personal identification: any piece of government issued photo identification;***
 - ***copy of proof of Canadian citizenship or statement of eligibility to work within Canada;***
 - ***signed testament of ethical conduct: provision of statement surrounding conduct during time in practice as relative to the MTAA governing documents;***
- 4) Candidates are required to complete the Academic and Clinical Skills Evaluations: Each applicant must complete a competency based, written evaluation in addition to a practical evaluation.



Substantial Equivalency Measurement

The results of each component are compiled and reviewed against the entry to practice competencies for Massage Therapists. It is important to understand that there is no one particular expected outcome for this process - it is highly likely that each individual who completes the process will score differently and so therefore, **there is no intended pass or fail associated with completing this process.**

Alberta is unique in that the education landscape provides a plethora of “licensed” education and training options, none of which share a common foundation from a curriculum development standpoint. Therefore, nearly every practitioner’s education, professional development, time in practice and resulting level of competence is individual specific and as a result, this process is intended to measure where a practitioner is at, in relation to the entry to practice competencies. Essentially, after compilation and review of the results, evidence of gaps or deficiencies relative to the competencies will be clear.

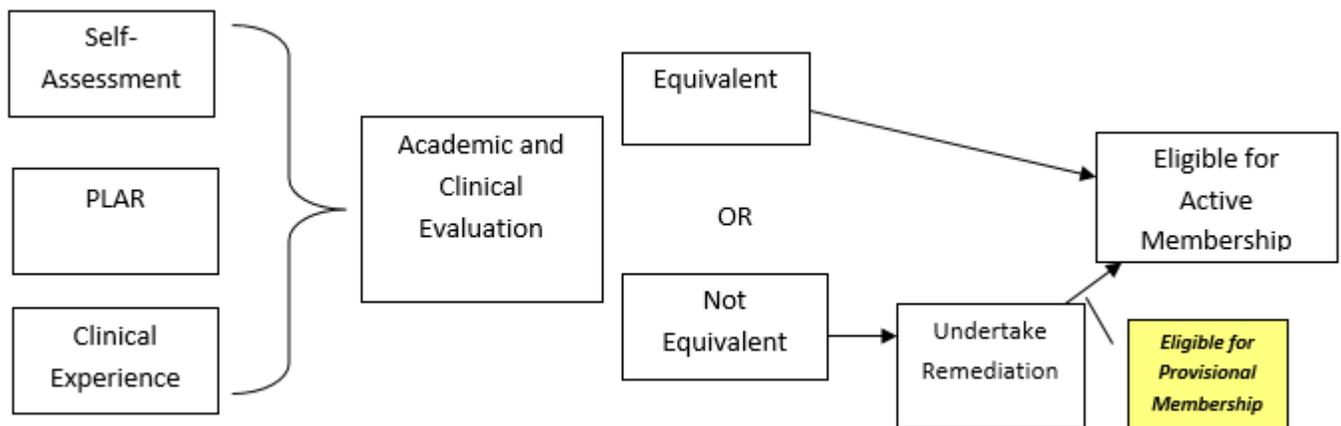
Substantial Equivalency Outcomes

At the completion of the full Substantial Equivalency process, if it has determined that the applicant substantially meets the entry to practice competencies, they are eligible for Active membership with the MTAA without further action required.

At the completion of the full process, if it has determined that the applicant *does not* substantially meet the entry to practice competencies, they will be required to satisfy specific education requirements that address their areas of deficiency. At this point, and upon beginning the remediation process, the applicant is eligible for Provisional Membership with the MTAA.

Upon completion of the Substantial Equivalency Process, the Membership Committee will provide clear recommendations, in writing, to the practitioner on the areas of additional education, training and or experience that are required to ensure they meet the entry to practice competencies. The applicant shall have a maximum of 24 months to carry out all recommendations. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to review and consider granting an extension that is to not exceed 12 months, only upon being provided with documented evidence that the practitioner has been actively seeking to meet the remediation requirements.

Visual Representation





Substantial Equivalency Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the self-assessment based on?

The self-assessment is based upon the Inter-Jurisdictional Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile for Massage Therapists. The applicant is asked to truthfully rate themselves, in terms of frequency of use in practice and proficiency, against the competencies.

What is a Prior Learning Assessment?

There are numerous sources that have attempted to define what Prior Learning Assessment is, how it is conducted, what it should be used for and when it should be used. A paper funded by the research network for *New Approaches to Lifelong Learning* states that “prior Learning Assessment (PLA), known in Canada as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), is a process of demonstrations, challenge examinations, and the personal portfolio allowing informal learning outcomes to be translated into academic credit”¹. Essentially, the entire process of measuring substantial equivalency could be considered as one big PLAR process, under this definition, with the only difference being that the outcome is not translated into academic credit, per se, but instead credit towards eligibility for membership with the MTAA. For purposes of providing and applying a definition to the Substantial Equivalency Process, the PLA will be a systematic review of formal learning experience (such as credentials and professional development achievements) in relation to the entry to practice competencies.

What Does Clinical Experience Mean?

When considering clinical experience, we look for evidence of significant patient care responsibility exhibited within your professional practice. We value broad based primary care experience, but will also take into consideration documented volunteer experience as a means of supplementing and strengthening your clinical experience background. Basic clinical practice is considered to include: obtaining proper patient consent, performing a complete initial assessment, writing and explaining treatment plans, performing safe, therapeutic massage treatments, providing a clinic room that is both hygienic and private, creating home care and appropriate exercise plans, creating accurate, legible chart notes that are stored appropriately.

What Types of Clinical Experiences Qualify?

When we look at clinical experience we are specifically looking for direct hands on therapeutic patient care experiences. Examples of what can be considered as clinical experiences within the Massage Therapy field include, but are not limited to:

- Private massage therapy practice (solo).
- Private practice Group/Clinic i.e., within a Physiotherapy, Chiropractic, Dental, Acupuncture, multi-practitioner Massage Therapy or allied healthcare clinic.
- Mobile Massage Therapy practice including home and institutional visits.
- Therapeutic clinical practice within a spa.
- Sports team Massage Therapist within a therapeutic context.
- Outreach clinical experience i.e., palliative, multiple sclerosis, cancer, pediatric, geriatric units of a hospital or institution.

¹ Thomas, A., Collins, M., Plett, L. (2001). Dimensions of the experience of prior learning assessment and recognition. *New Approaches to Lifelong learning*. OISE/UT



When it Comes to the Letters of Reference, Who is Considered to be Credible?

Credible sources may include a past or present employer, other healthcare professional, patient, civil servant, instructor, landlord or a notary public. Each letter must be authored by a different 'type' of credible source and be submitted directly to the MTAA Office (***please do NOT submit your reference letters with your application***).

What if I Fail a Component of the Substantial Equivalency Process?

It is not possible to "fail" a component of the Substantial Equivalency Process. There is no pass or fail. The intended outcome of this process is to acquire an objective 'snap shot' of where a practitioner is at in their competency development in relation to the Entry to Practice competencies in order to provide meaningful recommendations towards future education as a Massage Therapist.

How Much Does Completing Substantial Equivalency Cost?

There is a non-refundable Application Fee of \$350.00 plus GST to complete the entire Substantial Equivalency Process. In the event that you qualify for membership at the completion of the process, there will be additional costs incurred for your Active membership. The cost of completing any further education (remediation) recommendations is the sole responsibility of the candidate.

How do I Know That I've Completed the Substantial Equivalency Process?

Once you have completed the self-assessment, Prior Learning Assessment, the Academic and Clinical Skills and Judgment Evaluation and have received the Membership Committee recommendations, you have completed the evaluation part of this process. At this point, you will either being recommended to complete further education, based on your demonstrated and assessed competence, or that you are eligible for membership without further remediation being required.

Can I be an MTAA Member if I Complete the Substantial Equivalency Process?

Yes. Once you have completed the entire Substantial Equivalency Process, you would qualify for Active Membership with the MTAA.

How Long do I Have to Complete Recommendations Resulting From This Process?

If it is determined that you are required to complete additional training or course completion, you will have up to 24 months from point of acknowledgement and acceptance to complete the requirements prior to becoming eligible for Active membership.

What Happens if I do not Complete the Recommendations Within the Timeframe?

If you do not complete the recommendations within the required timeframe, your membership is likely to be suspended and/or cancelled.

Why Should I go Through the Substantial Equivalency Process?

Upon regulation, the future College of Massage Therapists is to provide for three (3) mechanisms of entry onto the register. One of these mechanisms is by way of Substantial Equivalency; the other two are by way of having completed an Entry to Practice Examination or by having transferred from another regulated jurisdiction in Canada.

Further, in moving towards regulation in Alberta and understanding that the Entry to Practice competencies are to be based upon the Inter-jurisdictional Competencies for Massage Therapists, better understanding your unique positioning, in relation to these competencies, having not completed education modelled after them, allows you to develop yourself as a professional to best meet the needs and expectations of a quality and outcome focused patient population.



This process has been carefully thought out, widely consulted upon and researched – with the end result of portability of the profession in mind. Once regulated, registrants of the College of Massage Therapists in Alberta will have the ability to transfer to other regulated jurisdictions in Canada.

Our intention in implementing this process specifically is to ensure that we are not creating any legitimate exceptions that may impede the mobility of Alberta Massage Therapists when migrating to another regulated jurisdiction. It is our intention to facilitate the recognition of Alberta Massage Therapists within each of the regulated jurisdictions in Canada, so that in the event that they relocate, their ability to practice has no encumbrances placed upon it.



Substantial Equivalency Application

Applicant Contact Information

Name	
Street Address	
City, Prov., Postal Code	
Home Phone	
Work Phone	
E-Mail Address	

Initial Qualifications and Education

Institution Name			
Address			
City, Prov., Postal Code			
Phone			
Credentials Achieved		Date	

**** Use additional sheet for qualifications and education if necessary**

Documents Submitted

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Credential Obtained | <input type="checkbox"/> Official Transcript |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed Program and Course Outlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Curriculum Vitae/Resume |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development Certificates and Course Outlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of Citizenship or Eligibility to Work Within Canada |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Patient Treatment Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Reference (3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Personal Identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of First Aid and CPR certificates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Process Fee (\$367.50 including GST) | |

This application will not be processed until all of the required documents outlined above have been received.

Applicant Declaration

By submitting this application, I declare that it has been completed accurately and honestly. No disciplinary action has been, or is pending, against me. I have never been the subject of any investigation, either civil or criminal, in connection with any sexual act, misconduct, molestation, and/or assault.

My signature below indicates my declaration that to the best of my knowledge the information provided and statements made in this application and any attached documents, is true. I agree that my conduct in practice will be in accordance with the MTAA Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Guidelines for Professional Boundaries, Standards of Practice and any other governing documents of the Association. I realize that I may lose my membership and membership privileges if complaints about me are found to be in violation of these documents.

Signature: _____

Date: _____