



MTANS

Professional Development Policy



Policy: Professional Development

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Policy: Professional Development

About this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements and obligations for the professional development for members of the Massage Therapists' Association of Nova Scotia (MTANS). MTANS believes in the importance of professional development through self-determined continuing education with public safety, competency, ethical care, and professional reputation at the forefront of our concerns.

The Nova Scotia *Massage Therapists Titles Protection Act* (2019) requires MTANS members to participate in professional development activities.

This policy considers the association's mission, vision, and Code of Ethics as well as the responsibilities and needs of members. MTANS is committed to promoting the science, art, and philosophy of massage therapy by ensuring the highest professional standards for the protection of the public, and to support the professional development of its members.

Professional Development is defined as any post-graduate learning experience which directly relates to massage therapy and enhances an RMT's skills or practice. MTANS respects a member's right to determine the ongoing development of their professional competencies. The learning experience may include, but is not limited to, courses, workshops, conferences, volunteering, or self-study.

Definitions

Professional activity: refers to a course, lecture, webinar, workshop, or other professional activity in which a member participates to obtain Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

- **Primary professional activities** are within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy and the entry to practice competencies as defined by the Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FOMTRAC).
- **Secondary professional activities** are complementary to massage therapy and are not considered part of the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy. This category includes business courses pertaining to practice management.
- **Bonus professional activities** are awarded for participation in MTANS activities such as the annual general meeting (AGM), semi-annual general meeting (SAGM), or other such activities as approved by the Board of Directors. These are primary in nature unless otherwise stated.

Professional Development Cycle (PD Cycle): refers to the three (3) calendar years within which a member acquires CEUs. The PD Cycle begins on January 1st of the first year and ends on December 31st of the third year, and repeats in three-year cycles thereafter, e.g., January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2026.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU): These are assigned a value of 1 CEU for every 2 hours of participation in both primary and secondary professional development activities. Activities



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are only given credit if they took place during the member's PD Cycle (except for carry forwards; see *Carry Forwards*) and only while the RMT has been a member of MTANS. CEUs are only awarded once an activity has been completed, e.g., if taking a course that starts in Dec 2024 and finishes in January 2025, CEUs can only be submitted at the completion of the course and count toward the PD Cycle in which they are completed.

- Active and Inactive members: CEU requirements are the same except for Emergency First Aid/CPR; Inactive members are not required to maintain up to date First Aid.
- Both active and inactive members must acquire thirty (30) CEUs within the PD Cycle.
 - Twenty-five (25) of these MUST be primary professional activities; and,
 - A maximum of five (5) CEUs may be secondary professional activities.
- New MTANS members (*including new graduates and members transferring from another association or regulated jurisdiction*): the PD Cycle commences on the first day of membership and continues for the remainder of the first year plus three (3) additional calendar years, e.g., July 15, 2024 — December 31, 2027.

Carry forwards: A member may acquire more than the required 30 CEUs within any given PD Cycle. When this happens, the RMT is permitted to *carry forward* a maximum of ten (10) CEUs to the next cycle.

- Carry forward CEUs consist only of primary professional development activities.

Competency: Includes the knowledge, skills, and professional judgement required to perform safely and ethically under the Massage Therapy scope of practice.

Modality: refers to a specific technique, method, or skill; a therapeutic technique and/or intervention implemented by an RMT during massage therapy treatment such as Swedish massage techniques, lymphatic drainage techniques, or myofascial release techniques.

PD Committee: refers to the Professional Development Committee.

Professional obligation

MTANS members are always accountable for their massage therapy practice. Members have a professional obligation to maintain competencies and stay up to date with new information relevant to their practice area(s). This obligation is inherent to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice:

- **Principle 1 (Benefit clients and serve their best interests)**: To fulfill the goal of benefiting clients and serving their best interests, RMTs commit to benefiting clients and serving clients' best interests by using their knowledge, skills, and professional judgment; Ensure that their professional knowledge and skills are current and evidence-informed, based on continuing professional development, clinical research,



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practice context, client perspective, and practitioner experience; Are knowledgeable about other regulated health professions.

- Principle 3 (Not harm clients): Not harm clients by making sure we have the knowledge, skills, and judgement to practice massage therapy safely.
- Principle 4 (Be responsible and accountable): Meaningfully participate in advancing professional competencies and continuing professional development through self-evaluation of practice, and appropriately respond to the outcomes of evaluations and assessments.

It is a member's professional obligation to take CEUs that enhance their professional field of knowledge, competencies, and treatment skills. Members should aim to complete courses or activities that enhance skill levels and professional competencies to improve the delivery of care to clients. MTANS members are strongly encouraged to attain their CEUs in a variety of ways each year, and not limit educational experiences to one mode of learning.

Professional Development is a mandatory component of annual renewal of membership with MTANS. Every member is expected to participate in and remain compliant with the requirements listed in this policy and must declare, as part of the annual renewal, that they have completed or are up to date on all PD requirements.

Professional Development activities should be planned in such a way that any administrative difficulties, such as course cancellations, are easily overcome and remediated. MTANS has provided a variety of ways by which members can attain CEUs, including online learning, podcasts, and reading texts/journal articles. It is the responsibility of each member to know the dates of their PD Cycle and to plan their professional development appropriately to meet submission deadlines.

All active and inactive members are responsible to submit activity reports on or before December 31st of the third year of their cycle. All forms associated with professional development are available in the Members Only section of the MTANS website at <https://www.mtans.ca>



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Key Policy Points

- A PD Cycle is three (3) calendar years;
- CEUs are due on or before December 31st of the last year of the PD Cycle;
- All members of MTANS (active and inactive) shall accumulate thirty (30) CEUs in each three-year cycle, of which a minimum of twenty-five (25) MUST be from primary activities, a maximum of five (5) may be from secondary activities;
- CEUs are categorized into primary, secondary, or bonus professional activities - Bonus CEUs are considered primary;
- 1 CEU = 2 hours of professional continuing education activity;
- Up to 10 surplus Primary CEUs may be carried forward to the next consecutive PD cycle;
- MTANS members are responsible for maintaining records of their professional development activities and must retain proof of their completion; and
- Members are required to submit copies of these records to the PD Committee at the time of submissions as well as for auditing purposes.

Summary of restricted activities

There are certain activities and controlled practices which are not permissible in the profession of massage therapy and MTANS Scope of Practice. These activities should not be conducted within a massage therapy treatment and their use may result in disciplinary action for operating outside of scope. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Performing a treatment modality or technique that is not approved as massage therapy or does not fall under the scope of the profession and billing it as massage therapy;
- Prescribing and administering medication or providing nutritional or medication counselling (e.g., vaccination, vitamins, supplements);
- Providing a diagnosis and/or suggesting that a therapeutic intervention can provide a cure for a disease or syndrome;



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- Puncture of the dermis (e.g., acupuncture, dry needling);
- Performing all forms of psychotherapy, mental health counselling, talk therapy, bodytalk, or spiritual counselling;
- Providing advice/coaching/instructing on areas outside the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy (e.g., the client's mental, financial, nutritional, or social health) unless in the form of a referral;
- Inserting equipment or body parts into the ear canal, anus, vagina, urethra, beyond the uvula, and massage of the genitals;
- Resetting or attempting to treat a broken bone or joint;
- High velocity, low amplitude joint mobilization (i.e., Grade 5 joint mobilizations);
- Treatment of animals (please refer to the position statement on treatment of animals);
- Complementary and alternative therapies (e.g., energy work, self-affirmation, herbal remedies); except Level 1 Reiki.

Please note: the practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Osteopathy, amongst others (i.e., physiotherapy, chiropractic, etc.), are approaches to care which are outside the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy and are addressed in the MTANS Dual Health Profession Policy.

Assignment of professional development activities

When determining whether an educational activity qualifies as a CE, members should evaluate:

- its relationship with common practice,
- the core competencies as defined by the Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FOMTRAC), and
- the MTANS Scope of Practice.

Each member is expected to operate their practice in accordance with any legislation pertaining to the practice of massage therapy in Nova Scotia, MTANS Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, policies, and guidelines.

The choice of course and/or direction of professional development is the responsibility of the individual member and must adhere to the requirements of this policy. The committee encourages members to evaluate their choice of course/workshop and related professional development activities in terms of benefit to the ongoing quality improvement of their practice.

MTANS members earn CEUs for Professional Development activities that meet the criteria set forth in this policy. MTANS is not responsible for the quality of courses or instructors and



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therefore it is the responsibility of the member to choose PD activities accordingly and based on what is of value within their practice.

Primary professional activities

Primary professional activities are directly related to the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy and the core competencies. Not all modalities considered to be within the MTANS scope of practice will be covered by your professional liability insurance provider. Prior to attending a course or training in any modality, please check with your insurer to verify whether additional payment or riders may be necessary. Proof of certification or qualifications may also be required.

Primary professional development activities include:

- In-Person Courses: Attending workshops, seminars, courses, and conferences. These courses must take place in real time and attendance could be in-person or online/virtual.
 - Enrolment in healthcare-related curriculum, college, or university courses that do not fall within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy may receive CE credit for time spent on aspects of the curriculum that are within Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy and the core competencies.
- First aid/CPR courses: Please refer to the relevant section of this document for more information on First Aid/CPR requirements for membership.
- Volunteering: Using professional skills and knowledge for unpaid activities to promote the profession of massage therapy.
 - This includes time spent volunteering with the MTANS Board of Directors, MTANS committees, at community events, health and wellness trade shows, expos, sporting events, or treating groups with special needs.
 - Self-promotion and business marketing activities are not eligible.
 - If a per diem was received for this type of work, it is not eligible to be claimed as a CEU as it considered a form of compensation for time.
- Teaching: Preparation time only for massage therapy courses in a recognized school or as part of a post-graduate program. Paid teaching hours are not awarded credit.
 - This is limited to preparation time for the first time teaching a course, or
 - Revision/preparation time if there has been a 50% or greater revision of the course material.
- Acting as a mentor or preceptor: For a student in a recognized massage therapy program
 - A maximum of six (6) CEUs per cycle is allowed for this activity.



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- Publishing: Submitting articles for publication that are relevant to the core competencies and within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy
- Bonus professional activities: Participation in MTANS annual and semi-annual general meetings or any other Board-approved activity.
- Self-directed activity*:
 - Reading a book/text: 0.5 CEU per 25 pages
 - Video/DVD/podcast/webinar including pre-recorded workshops/courses: 2 hours = 1 CEU
 - Reading an article: 1 CEU
 - Conducting research
 - Field trips
 - Study groups

*The Self-Directed Activity Report and supporting documentation must be submitted for each unique item. The form itself earns an additional one (1) CEU per self-directed study item. All related questions must be answered fully with a minimum of 2-3 complete sentences. These are assessed at the discretion of the PD Committee.

Primary modalities and/or competencies in the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy include, *but are not limited to*:

Active release	Cupping (excluding: fire cupping)
Acupressure*	Deep connective tissue
Anatomy and physiology	Deep muscle
Activity of Daily Living (ADL) Assessments	Embryology
Aquatic massage therapy	Esalen Tissue
Biomechanics	Ethics (and professionalism)
Bowen	General Swedish massage
Charting skills and medical reports	Graston
Clinical and orthopedic assessments	Guasha*
Communication in the therapeutic environment	Hydrotherapy
CPR/First Aid (excludes: Mental Health First Aid; see <i>secondary</i>)	Hot Stone Therapy (excluding: "energy work" components)
Cranial Sacral Therapy	Infection control
	Indian Head Massage



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Infant massage	Policies and procedures of MTANS
Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization (IASTM)	Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)
Integrative manual therapy	Reflexology technique* (as a modality within scope)
Joint mobilization	Remedial Exercise (including exercise therapy)
Jurisprudence	Research literacy
Kinesio taping	Rolfing
Labour support	Home Care
Lomi Lomi	Shiatsu
Manual Lymph Drainage	Sports Massage (including athletic taping and bracing)
Mental health first aid	Strain-counter strain
Meridian massage	Structural integration
Muscle Energy Technique	Thermal applications
Myofascial Release	Traditional Thai/Thai Yoga massage
Myology	Trauma informed care
Neurology	Trigger Point Therapy
Neuromuscular Therapy	Tui Na*
Neuromuscular Integration and Structural Alignment (NISA)	Visceral manipulation
Pathology	
Prenatal and pregnancy massage	

*When taking courses in modalities such as Guasha, Tui Na, Reflexology technique courses, and acupressure, members are responsible for ensuring their application in practice remains within scope. For further guidance, please refer to the *Scope of Practice Guidelines*.

Any modality or competency not currently listed is subject to approval by the MTANS Board of Directors.

Secondary professional activities

Secondary professional activities are complementary to massage therapy and are not considered part of the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy. They may be billed as part of a massage therapy treatment plan but cannot be performed independently and billed as 'massage therapy'.



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This list also contains competencies related to business, taxation, accounting, and computer skills as they may be applied in the context of practice management.

Note: There are differences between “restricted activities” which are NEVER permissible in the context of a massage therapy practice, and complementary modalities which, in and of themselves are out of scope but MAY be used when appropriate and indicated in the context of a massage therapy treatment.

Activities carried out by a Massage Therapist beyond the strict practice of massage therapy might not be covered under the member’s professional liability insurance and it may be necessary to obtain separate insurance coverage for these activities. MTANS members are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately qualified in and adequately insured for complementary modalities.

Secondary professional activities include:

- In-Person Courses: Attending workshops, seminars, courses, and conferences which are complementary to massage therapy (not primary). These courses must take place in real time and attendance could be in person or online.
- Teaching: Preparation time only for massage therapy courses in a recognized school or as part of a post-graduate program. Paid teaching hours are not awarded credit.
 - This is limited to preparation time for the first time teaching a course, or
 - Revision/preparation time if there has been a 50% or greater revision of the course material.
- Publishing: Submitting articles for publication in massage therapy publications that are complementary to massage therapy.
- Self-directed activity* for modalities that are complementary to massage therapy:
 - Reading a book/text: 0.5 CEU per 25 pages
 - Video/DVD/podcast/webinar including pre-recorded workshops/courses: 2 hours = 1 CEU
 - Reading an article: 1 CEU
 - Conducting research
 - Field trips
 - Study groups

*The Self-Directed Activity Report must be completed for each unique item. The form itself earns an additional one (1) secondary CEU per self-directed study item in this category. All related questions must be answered fully with a minimum of 2-3 complete sentences. These are assessed at the discretion of the PD Committee.



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Modalities considered complementary to the practice of massage therapy (but which are OUTSIDE the scope of practice) include, but are not limited to:

Alexander Technique

Aromatherapy

Electrical therapy techniques including:
IFC, TENS, Therapeutic Ultrasound, Pulsed
High Frequency - Low Intensity Laser
Therapy, Shockwave

Guided Imagery

Healing Touch

Inhalation Therapy

Meditation

Pilates teacher training, (excluding:
personal fitness classes)

Reiki (1st degree only)

Social determinants of health

Study in the field of healthcare or
enrolment in another health-related
program (that is not massage therapy)

Therapeutic Touch

Touch for Health

Trager

Yoga teacher training, (excluding: personal
fitness classes)

Business/Practice Management:

Accounting

Billing procedures

Business management

Business or insurance practices and
procedures in massage therapy

Computer skills training

CRA-Taxes (including HST)

Marketing

Public speaking

Bonus professional activities

Bonus CEUs may be awarded for specific MTANS programs or events. Bonus CEUs are primary professional development activities. Bonus CEUs include attending the MTANS annual general meeting (AGM), semi-annual general meeting (SAGM), special member meetings, and completion of other activities as approved by the board of directors.

Emergency First Aid and CPR certification

Emergency First Aid and CPR certification is an MTANS membership requirement and is also given CE credit. While Emergency First Aid-CPR is the minimum membership requirement, MTANS members may be required by employers or other circumstances to receive additional training. All First Aid and CPR certifications are considered primary professional development activities by MTANS. Each MTANS member is required to self-monitor the date of expiry for their certification and to recertify appropriately, prior to the expiry date. Please refer to the section pertaining to first aid certification in the *Non-Compliance Policy* for more information.



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Activities NOT eligible as professional development

If you are not certain as to whether an activity is eligible for CE credit, please refer first to the *MTANS Scope of Practice Guide* and then to the above lists pertaining to eligible professional development activities. If it is still not clear, please consult with MTANS and the PD Committee directly.

There are certain activities which are NOT eligible for CE credit. These include, but may not be limited to, the following items:

- Activities for which you are receiving an income;
- Discussing a case/client as a normal component of collaborative care;
- Conferring with peers (unless as part of a study group);
- Clinic supervising hours;
- Hours spent teaching in a school or continuing education course;
- Job shadowing;
- Attending trade shows to promote individual business;
- Massage therapy treatment exchanges;
- Educational activities pertaining to treatment of animals; and,
- Participation in personal fitness/yoga/Pilates classes.

Proof of activities

MTANS members are responsible for maintaining records of their professional development activities and must retain proof of their completion. Members should create a professional development portfolio in which to maintain these records. These are then submitted to the PD Committee as proof of a CE Activity with the Activity Report and must be retained by the member for auditing purposes.

The following are examples of the type of proof RMTs must retain and use to verify activities:

- Attending workshops/courses: Course information, including name of organization and contacts for verification; or receipt, written proof of attendance, transcripts, certificate or diploma, CEU reporting form signed by the instructor. Courses must be completed to receive credit.
- Presenting/teaching workshops/courses: Brochure from the course taught, dates/prep time teaching hours (excluding breaks), names of organizations, and contacts for verification.
- Members on committees: Names of committees, meeting dates, and number of hours for each meeting.



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- Peer study group: A list of the members of the study group; this list must be signed by a member of the study group AND the Self-directed Activity Report must be completed.
- Participation in formal research: The type of research and hours of activity; letter of verification from research supervisors, etc., AND completion of the Self-directed Activity Report.
- Submitting articles for publication: A copy of the article and number of hours of preparation time.
- Volunteer event: Event information, a thank you letter from the organization, participation certificate, or a letter of corroboration from organizers of the event.
- Acting as a mentor/preceptor: Contact information for the person and school you are mentoring/precepting with as well as a copy of any paperwork filled out for this role.
- Self-directed activities: The Self-directed Activity Report is submitted as part of the proof of activity and has required information to be filled out. Include photos/screenshots of the book, article, or podcast as an attachment to the submission.
- Reviewing books/articles/videos/podcasts: A picture/screenshot of the item must be submitted/uploaded as well as a brief synopsis or record of learning that occurred, which is recorded in the Self-directed Activity Report.

Obtaining approval for specific courses or workshops

As of January 1, 2024, MTANS is no longer pre-approving educational activities for CE value. Members are expected to know and understand their scope of practice and the requirements of this policy and submit accordingly.

Request for extension

Members may make a written request to the PD Committee for an extension based on compassionate grounds. Each request shall be reviewed confidentially, and members will receive a written determination, a copy of which shall be retained in the member's file. Please keep in mind the following:

- The request must be issued prior to the end of the PD Cycle to allow for review and approval.
- Written proof is required for extension on the grounds of serious medical or family emergencies that occur near the end of a PD Cycle. This may take the form of a letter from an attending physician, copy of a death certificate, or other suitable proof of an emergency or medical issue.



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- A reasonable effort should be made to acquire CEUs prior to a request for extension. Only rarely would a member be granted an extension for professional development requirements. This extension will be determined by the PD Committee.
- Should the request be based on a condition such as depression, mental illness, or other such condition that may prevent a member from acquiring CEUs and/or practicing safely with respect to the public, the PD Committee reserves the right to refer the request to the MTANS Board of Directors. The Board may then elect to refer the matter to a Capacity Hearing to determine whether the member can safely practice massage therapy in the public interest.

Audits

The purpose of the auditing process is to ensure that MTANS members are compliant with the requirements of the PD policy. The audit helps MTANS fulfill one of its mandates in ensuring that members practice competently, safely, and are up to date on changes within the industry which may impact client care.

All PD submissions may be subject to an audit.

Audits are performed by the PD Committee throughout the year following the December 31st deadline for submissions. MTANS members can expect to be notified at any point in this time frame as to the results of their PD audit. If you have NOT received an email confirming that your submission has been audited and accepted, it is still considered under review.

Once MTANS members have submitted all PD requirements and completed the Summary of Activity Report, their submission is audited to ensure they are compliant with the requirements set forth in this policy. Compliance with the policy is achieved when:

- Reports have been correctly filled out and submitted;
- All PD activities apply to the practice of massage therapy as either Primary or Secondary activities;
- First Aid requirements are up-to-date; and,
- Proof of participation for each activity has been submitted.

Audit Outcomes

If there are no issues with a PD submission: members will receive an email confirming their PD submission has been reviewed by a committee of their professional peers and they are compliant with policy requirements. No further action is required.

If there ARE issues with a PD submission: the member will receive an email notification that the audit is complete and be provided with an outline of the items requiring their review.



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- The PD Committee will work with members to help them address any issues with their submission. This may take the form of submission of missing proof of PD Activities, completion of additional CEUs, a review of the *Scope of Practice Guideline*, and/or PD Policy review.
- All PD requirements must be fulfilled within the time frame as agreed upon between the PD Committee and the member.
- Refusal to work with the PD Committee on meeting the requirements of this policy may have implications for your ability to renew membership with MTANS for the following year.

Compliance and discipline

All active and inactive members are subject to compliance requirements regarding Professional Development. Non-compliance pertains to members who submit late or incomplete PD reports, those who refuse to work with the PD Committee during an audit, or those who do not submit any CEUs. Please refer to the *Non-Compliance Policy* for more details.

Relevant documents

- *Massage Therapists Titles Protection Act* (Nova Scotia)
- Code of Ethics
- Scope of Practice Guideline
- Policy: Titles Protection
- Policy: Non-Compliance
- CEU Online Submissions Guide
- Professional Development Quick Reference Guide