



Substantial Equivalency

Application and Process

Substantial Equivalency Process

Purpose of Substantial Equivalency

The MTAA Substantial Equivalency Process provides therapists wishing to gain membership with the association the ability to do so, by proving competency in the areas needed to practice safely and effectively within the province of Alberta. 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 when considering the objective of being able to actively demonstrate Entry to Practice Competence. Once any remediation issued 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 Clinical places of practice, detailing clinical experience, self-employment, training, professional development; please include populations treated, modalities used and focus of practice (if relevant)***
 - ***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;***
- 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 expected outcome for this process. Each portion of the exam is graded separately, and these cumulative results are what determines whether a therapist is deemed to show competence in practice and gain membership with the MTAA.

Substantial Equivalency Outcomes

Once the candidate has completed the Application, Evaluation and Examination portion of the Substantial Equivalency Process, one of the following outcomes will be determined:

- 1) 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.
- 2) At the completion of the full process, if it has determined that the applicant *does not* substantially meet the Entry to Practice Competencies and will be informed that they must complete a Massage Therapy Program meeting the current MTAA membership requirements before Active membership can be considered.
- 3) 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. Once completed, the candidate will be able to apply for Active 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 will be provided with the required due date to have complete all remediation issued. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to review and consider granting an extension only upon being provided with documented evidence that the practitioner has been actively seeking to meet the remediation requirements.

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?

A Prior Learning Assessment is the review of a practitioner's education and history of practice used to determine whether or not the applicant is a candidate to challenge the Substantial Equivalency Exam as determined by the MTAA. The Membership Committee of the MTAA will review the documents submitted by the applicant and determine the candidate's eligibility to proceed with the process. The Prior Learning Assessment is a tool used to determine that a fair and thorough review of the candidate's experiences are taken into consideration.

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. *This experience is to be documented thoroughly in the candidate's resume which is to be included.*

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 practitioner).
- 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.
- Educational Outreach clinical experience i.e., palliative, multiple sclerosis, cancer, pediatric, geriatric units of a hospital or institution.

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 professionals, instructors, or patients. All three (3) letters of recommendation must be included with the application submitted.

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

If the candidate is deemed not to be substantially equivalent to the MTAA's standard, the candidate will be notified of this in writing. In addition, the Membership Committee will notify the candidate of the areas in examination which they did not meet the required passing grade. The ability to gain Active Membership with the MTAA will not be given to the candidate, however recommendations towards future education and remediation will provide the candidate the ability to challenge the examination again if they so choose.

How Much Does Completing Substantial Equivalency Cost?

There is a non-refundable Application Fee of \$350.00 plus GST for the first portion of the Substantial Equivalency Process. The second portion of the Substantial Equivalency Process, the testing and examination, requires a separate fee of \$700.00 plus GST (if the applicant brings a volunteer for the exam) or \$850.00 plus GST (if the application cannot bring volunteer for the exam). Please be advised that additional service charges may apply depending on the form of payment issued.

In the event that you qualify for MTAA 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. If an unsuccessful candidate wishes to re-challenge the examination portion, full payment is required to do so.

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

Once a candidate has completed all steps of the Substantial Equivalency Process, the Membership Committee will notify the applicant of their recommendation in writing.

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

Yes. Once you have completed the entire Substantial Equivalency Process and been approved to proceed, you will 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 be issued a specified due date to have all remediation completed.

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

If you do not complete the recommendations within the required timeframe, the Membership Committee reserves the right to withdraw any previous recommendations provided and you may be required to complete the Substantial Equivalency Process again.

Why Should I go Through the Substantial Equivalency Process?

By completing the Substantial Equivalency Process a candidate may prove their experience and knowledge in the field of Massage Therapy is equal to that of a graduate from an approved Alberta educational institution. By doing so, one can gain membership with the MTAA if they do not meet the other options for membership requirements. This process is necessary to ensure that all members of the MTAA hold the ability to practice safely and competently in the province of Alberta and can adhere to the MTAA's Standards of Practice, Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Required Documentation Review

Please be advised that applications will not be processed until all required documents outlined below have been received as well as the required Application Fee of \$350 plus GST

- Copy of Credential Obtained
- Detailed Program and Course Outlines
- Professional Development Certificates and Course Outlines
- Current Curriculum Vitae/Resume
- Copy of Personal Identification
- Copy of valid Canadian Standard First Aid and CPR Level C (or higher) certificates
- Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector for all jurisdictions you have resided in the past 5 years.
- Letter of Good Standing/Confirmation from current or previous professional association/regulatory college
- Proof on English Language Competence as outlined by the MTAA as follows:

Canadian High School Transcript showing completion of English 30 Level / Grade 12 English or equivalent, or

- Canadian High School Diploma, or
- Successful completion of General Educational Development (GED) tests, or
- Completion of the TOEFL Internet Based Test (iBT) with the following minimum scores:

Writing: 20 Speaking: 20 Listening: 20 Reading: 19

Contact the MTAA Office to obtain other test options and minimum scores required



Substantial Equivalency Exam Preparation

Introduction to the Exam

Exam Format

The MTAA Substantial Equivalency Exam is prepared and executed by the Director of Curriculum and instructors at MH Vicars educational institution. There are campuses in both Calgary and Edmonton, providing candidates the opportunity to challenge the exam in either of these locations.

Both areas of the test have been prepared to meet the Interjurisdictional Standards Documents, and all proctors have been trained to ensure a fair and unbiased assessment of the candidate's performance.

A candidate must first submit the application, self-assessment and payment in order to be approved by the Education Committee for challenging of tests. Once the committee has completed the candidate's PLAR, the MTAA office will contact the candidate to schedule test dates.

Please note the Substantial Equivalency Exam is executed over two (2) days, the written component on day one, and the oral practical component on day two.

Components of Substantial Equivalency

The Substantial Equivalency Exam is comprised of two (2) sections, to ensure a valid level of knowledge and skill is shown by a candidate.

1) **Written Exam:**

Each applicant must successfully pass a written examination which proves a level of competency equal or greater than gained from an approved massage therapy education program in the province of Alberta. The written examination encompasses theory included in the Interjurisdictional Standards as set out for Canadian massage therapy education.

Topics covered in the examination are as follows:

- ***Anatomy and Physiology***
- ***Pathology***
- ***Hydrotherapy***
- ***Ethics***
- ***Musculoskeletal System***
- ***Clinical Judgement***
- ***Assessments & Orthopedic Testing***
- ***Treatments***
- ***Business***
- ***Neurology***
- ***Research***
- ***Remedial Exercise***

The written examination can run between 2 ½-3 hours in length, depending on challenger. It is a paper format, multiple choice examination.

2) **Oral Practical Examination:**

The oral practice section of the examination is to prove competence in the safe performance of massage therapy modalities while adhering to the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta's Standards of Practice. This portion of examination is a 2-3 hour hands on assessment, covering the following subjects:

- ***Palpation of the musculoskeletal system***
- ***Client Intake and Consent***
- ***Postural assessment and orthopedic testing including neurological testing and range of motion***
- ***Treatments: includes basic and advanced techniques, draping, positioning and hydrotherapy***
- ***Clinical Impression***
- ***Remedial Exercise***

How to Prepare for the Examination

It is advised that students study the above topics and treatment scenarios, as well as review the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta's Standards of Practice prior to challenging the exam. Below is a suggested list of resources to reference during preparation:

Kuntzman, Andrew & Tortora, Gerard *Anatomy and Physiology For The Manual Therapies*, 2010

Salvo, Susan G. *Massage Therapy Principles and Practice*, 5th edition, 2016

Salvo, Susan G. *Mosby's Pathology for Massage Therapists*, 4th edition, 2018

Biel, Andrew *Trail Guide to the Body*, 5th edition, 2014

Beil, Andrew *Trail Guide to the Body Student Handbook*, 5th edition, 2014

Beil, Andrew *Trail Guide to the Body Quick Reference to Stretch and Strengthen*, 2014

BarCharts Inc. *Medical Terminology: The Basics Study Guide*,

Rattray, Fiona & Linda Ludwig *Clinical Massage Therapy*, Talus, 2000

Magee, David J. *Orthopedic Physical Assessment*, 6th edition, 2014

Sohnen-Moe, Benjamin *The Ethics of Touch: The Hands-on Practitioner's Guide to Creating a Professional, Safe and Enduring Practice*, 2nd edition, 2013

What to Bring on Exam Day

Please come prepared to your examination days with a bottle of water, lunch or snack, linens for treating (bottom and top sheet, face cradle cover) and oil, gel or cream to treat with. Dress professionally and neatly in clothes you can massage in, and ensure you are presenting yourself in a hygienic manner with trimmed and clean nails, no perfume and limited jewellery. Indoor shoes are required.

Substantial Equivalency Application

Personal Information					
Legal First Name (Please Print)		Commonly Used First Name		Middle Initial	
Legal Last Name					
Email Address					
Mailing Address					
City/Town/Village		Province		Postal Code	
Home Phone Number ()		Cell Phone Number ()		Preferred Method of Communication	
Date of Birth Year Month Day		Gender (Please Indicate) <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Email Only <input type="checkbox"/> Text Only <input type="checkbox"/> Both Text & Email	

English Language Proficiency					
All applicants must provide documentation to support English language proficiency by one of the following means. Please indicate which documentation you are submitting:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian High School Transcript showing completion of English 30 Level / Grade 12 English or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Successful completion of General Educational Development (GED) tests <input type="checkbox"/> Has completed and submitted an MTAA Waiver or MTAA Confirmation Form meeting all requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of the TOEFL Internet Based Test (iBT) with the following minimum scores: Writing: 20 Speaking: 20 Listening: 20 Reading: 19 <i>Contact the MTAA Office to obtain other test options and minimum scores required</i>					
Credentials Achieved				Date Year Month Day	
Other Training and Education if applicable: You can provide this in a separate document if more space is required.					

Applicant Declaration

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.

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.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Submission Details

The MTAA requires that you provide a completed application, all documentation outlined a completed Self- Assessment issued by the MTAA as well as payment for the Application Fee of \$350 plus GST and MTAA Transaction Fees before your submission will be accepted.

You can submit all information by the following means:

Email to: info@mtaalberta.com **Fax to:** 403-346-2269
Mail to: #204, 37 Beju Industrial Drive Sylvan Lake, AB T4S 0K9

If your initial application is approved, you are required to register for both the written and practical examinations as the next step in the Substantial Equivalency Process. The fee for both Written and Practical Examination is \$700 + GST (with a volunteer) or \$850 + GST (without a volunteer).

Payment Details

The Initial Application Fee of 350 plus GST and MTAA Transaction Fees will be processed to the form of payment provided below:

Payment Type	Please circle:			
	VISA	MASTERCARD	AMERICAN EXPRESS	VISA Debit
Signature of Authorized Card Holder	Date			

The MTAA Application fee is non-refundable for all submissions.

Please note that fees for the substantial equivalency application and testing are subject to change.