



**MTAA Professional Development  
Guide for Members  
2022 – 2024**

# What is Professional Development?

The purpose of the MTAA's Professional Development Program is to support and encourage continued growth in the profession of Massage Therapy in areas that are directly related to our Scope of Practice and also relevant to the individual practitioner's practice.

## This Program Guide

This guide has been created to provide the member with clarity around the ways in which they may gain credits, the necessary requirements for each submission category and to allow them to plan their professional development education with confidence.

## Professional Development Requirements

All members are required to obtain 30 Professional Development Credits (PD Credits) during each education cycle. Our current education cycle started January 1, 2022, and ends December 31, 2024. Of the 30 credits required, at least 15 of these credits must be primary credits and the other 15 credits can be primary, secondary, voluntary or other. Up to 15 primary credits can be carried over from the current education cycle into the next education cycle if you wish to obtain more than the necessary credits. Please be advised that all 30 PD credits can be primary credit as secondary credits are not required.

To avoid missing any deadlines, we encourage members to submit any certificates of completion as they are received. You can do so by either uploading these to your member profile in which the MTAA Admin Team receives a notification, or you can submit these to the MTAA office by emailing [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com). It is the members responsibility to ensure all courses completed are MTAA approved.

Members that wish to mail in physical certificates must ensure that these are mailed well in advance of the deadline. These submissions must be received by the MTAA Administration Team prior to any deadlines. **The MTAA does not take responsibility for late submissions.**

All certificates of completion for an in person or online course completed between the dates of **January 1, 2022, and October 31, 2024, must be submitted on or before November 1, 2024.** It is advised that members submit their certificates as soon as they are received as opposed to waiting until the November 1, 2024, deadline. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Members that complete in person or online courses in the months of November and December 2024 have until December 31, 2024, to submit their certificates for the current education cycle. All submissions must be received no later than December 31, 2024. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Members who wish to earn PD credits through categories which are not course related, must submit all requirements on or before November 1, 2024. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

# Professional Development Common Q & A

## What are Primary and Secondary Credits?

**Primary** and **Secondary** Credits refer to the category by which the MTAA has deemed the learning in relation to the practice of Massage Therapy. These categories are most commonly found in the Course section of this guide, as well as other areas such as credits for Standard First Aid and attendance at the MTAA Annual General Meeting.

The MTAA requires members to complete a minimum of 15 primary credits to ensure that a solid amount of the professional development has been completed during the three (3) year education cycle.

A Massage Therapist's practice may include many different components, such as the treatment itself, billing, charting, research, teaching, and volunteering. The MTAA PD Program aims to recognize, encourage and support members by providing credits for activities that relate to and develop a well-rounded practice. Please review the credit types listed below and throughout this PD Program Guide to find out how you can enhance your practice while maintaining your requirements as an MTAA member.

**Primary Credits** - Activities in this category are directly related to the MTAA Scope of Practice, the practitioner's treatments and are covered by our General and Professional Liability Insurance for members. Examples include but are not limited to: modality courses, charting courses, pathological courses, remedial exercise courses, Standard First Aid, and attending the MTAA Annual General Meeting.

**Secondary Credits** - Activities in this category enhance the practice of Massage Therapy as defined by the MTAA Standards of Practice and are complementary to the MTAA Scope of Practice. These courses support the individual's career as a Massage Therapist, but generally do not relate to Massage Therapy treatments. Examples include but not limited to: courses related to business practices, marketing, and self-care.

## What happens if I do not meet the PD Credit Requirement?

Active members that do not meet the PD credit requirements for the current education cycle will see their membership suspended. During suspension, members are not covered by the MTAA liability insurance policy to practice. Most health insurance companies will not cover treatments completed during a period of suspension. You are required to have the 30 PD credits completed and confirmed with the MTAA before reinstatement can occur and are subject to pay the reinstatement fee.

### **If I belong to a Massage Therapy regulatory college, can I receive PD credits for the mandatory courses I must complete to maintain this registration?**

The MTAA recognizes that some members may also belong to a Massage Therapy regulatory college in which there are mandatory courses that are required to be completed. In these cases, the MTAA will provide Primary PD credits for these types of courses so long as the name of the member is indicated, and the hours of learning are identified on the certificates of completion. These must have been completed in the current education cycle to be accepted. For more information, please contact the MTAA directly.

### **Can I Repeat the Completion of Continuing Education Courses for PD Credit?**

Some members may wish to repeat continuing education courses from time to time. Please be advised that you cannot obtain PD credits for an approved course for consecutive education cycles. If you do wish to repeat an MTAA approved course, you must skip at least one education cycle before PD credits can be awarded.

## **Plagiarism**

The category of [Additional Learning](#) which includes case studies, literature reviews and more requires that members complete written work to be reviewed by the Competence Committee. It is important that this work is completed by the MTAA member requesting PD credits. Any MTAA member found to have committed or aided and abetted in the offence of plagiarism may be subject to the following penalties depending on the severity of their involvement in the offence:

- The member will receive no credits for the work submitted.
- The member may be prevented from receiving PD credits through the Additional Learning Category for the remainder of this current education cycle and possibly for additional education cycles that follow.
- The member may be disciplined if the MTAA Board of Directors deems it appropriate action for the offence committed. Depending on the offence, the member may see their membership suspended or possibly revoked.

## **Standard First Aid and CPR Level C or Higher**

All members are required to provide Standard First Aid (SFA) and CPR- Level C (or higher) certification at the time of applying for membership. Please see all requirements outlined below:

- Must be Canadian Certification, with a 3-year expiration.
- Must have no more than 50% of the certification course completed online.
- Members can complete certification that exceeds SFA & CPR - level C, however, they must provide the certification prior to the expiration of the current certification on file with the MTAA.
- The MTAA will accept interim certifications for the expiration that is indicated on the temporary certificate. Members must ensure they submit the full certification prior to the interim expiration date to avoid interruption in membership.
- Members can earn up to 7 primary credits per education cycle for SFA & CPR-level C (or higher) certification. Members will not receive additional credits if they wish to complete the certification more than once per education cycle.

**Note:** We do not accept certifications that are completed fully online, and we do not accept certifications that are valid for less than three (3) years unless it meets our requirements for exceptions outlined below. Courses taught within Canada that are approved certifications from other countries such as the USA will not be accepted.

As outlined in the MTAA Bylaws, members are responsible to ensure they maintain this certification while holding Active membership. The MTAA sends reminders to assist our members in maintaining this requirement, but it is the member's responsibility to ensure they update the MTAA with current certification.

Please be advised that failure to maintain this requirement will result in membership suspension and you will no longer be a member in good standing. If suspended, you are not covered by your MTAA liability policy to practice, and all health insurance companies will be notified of your suspension. Most health insurance companies do not accept treatment for coverage if completed by a suspended MTAA member. To reinstate your membership and to return to good standing status you are required to adhere to the current reinstatement requirements and fees. Members can verify their current SFA & CPR-C expiry date through their MTAA member profiles.

**Inactive Members:** Inactive members are not required to maintain this certification as they are non-practicing members.

## **SFA & CPR Certification Exceptions**

Active Members that are also active practicing nurses, paramedics, or doctors can provide proof of registration with their governing body to confirm certification in Standard First Aid. These members are required to complete CPR at a higher level than the required CPR- level C annually. Proof of this certification must be submitted to the MTAA annually. Members that meet the exception requirements are not eligible to receive the PD credits awarded for Standard First Aid and CPR as stated above.

# Professional Development Education Cycles and PD Credits in Relation to Membership Type

**Active Members:** All Active Members are required to complete 30 credits in each 3-year education cycle with ALL members being on the same cycle as follows:

**January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024**  
**January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027**

**Inactive Members:** In order to ensure that all members are maintaining competency in practice and to make the credit requirements as easy as possible, Inactive members are responsible for maintaining their credit requirements as follows:

1. Prior to switching to Inactive status, the member must have a minimum of 10 Professional Development credits on file per year of the education cycle in which Active membership was maintained. Once the minimum credits have been confirmed, the member is eligible to switch to Inactive status.
2. Members are not required to earn PD credits once they have switched to Inactive status.
3. Upon return to Active membership status, the member is required to complete 10 professional development credits per year of Active membership for each year remaining in the education cycle. All credit submissions must be received no later than the due date indicated for the education cycle in which they have switched back to Active status.

**New Member Exemption:** New members who have joined the MTAA will be exempt from 10 Primary PD credits for each full year of the credit cycle in which they were not an MTAA member. For more information, please contact the MTAA Administrative Team at [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com).

**New Graduates:** New graduates who have joined the MTAA will be exempt from 10 Primary PD credits for each full year of the credit cycle in which they were not an Active MTAA member. **New Graduates will also receive 10 primary credits for their diploma when obtaining Active membership!** Activation must occur in the same calendar year in which they graduated.

# MTAA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT TYPES

**Important:** All members are responsible to ensure that any type of Professional Development completed is approved by the MTAA. Members are required to search the PD Courses tab available in your member profile to ensure the courses which they enroll in are MTAA approved. If a course cannot be found on the MTAA Approved Course list, it is the responsibility of the member to apply for course approval. In this situation, the MTAA requires that any course approval in the final year of a PD cycle must be submitted no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>. This is to ensure that the Competence Committee has adequate time to review the course evaluation submission. If you require more information on this topic, please contact the MTAA Administrative Team at [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com).

Category	Maximum Credit Permitted for Each Education Cycle	For More Information
<b>MTAA Approved In-Person/Online Courses Primary or Secondary</b>	No cap on the number of credits a member can earn, however, only 15 primary PD credits can be carried over into the next education cycle.	See page 7
<b>University/College Level Courses</b>	No cap on the number of credits a member can earn, however, only 15 primary PD credits can be carried over into the next education cycle.	See page 7
<b>Courses for Other Professional Designations/Certifications</b> (i.e. Manual Osteopathic Training, Yoga Teacher Training, etc.)	This category is capped at 15 credits per education cycle.	See page 8
<b>Case Studies</b>	A maximum of 10 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 9
<b>Literature Reviews</b>	A maximum of 10 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 10
<b>Additional Independent Learning</b> (workshops, seminars, webinars, and conferences)	A maximum of 6 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 11
<b>Teaching Credits</b>	A maximum of 6 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 12
<b>Mentoring</b>	A maximum of 6 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 13
<b>Volunteering – Non-MTAA Activities</b>	A maximum of 6 credits per education cycle is permitted.	See page 14
<b>Volunteering – MTAA Activities</b>	No cap on the number of credits a member can earn for the MTAA Volunteering category, however members must note that the maximum carry over credits permitted is 15 primary PD credits per education cycle.	See page 15
<b>MTAA Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b>	Members that pre-register and attend the full AGM will receive 3 Primary PD credits for their attendance.	

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & UNIVERSITY COURSES

### MTAA APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION: IN-PERSON/ONLINE

Type: Primary Courses, Secondary Courses

Credits: 1 hour = 1 primary credit  
2 hours = 1 secondary credit

*There is no cap for the number of credits per cycle that members may earn by completing approved courses.*

**IMPORTANT:** All courses must be MTAA approved, or the renewal of a previously approved course must be confirmed before credits will be awarded to members. Therapists should search the MTAA PD Course listing which can be found on the member's side of our website under the PD Courses tab. If the course cannot be found under the PD Courses tab, the MTAA strongly recommends therapists communicate with the course instructor and request the course be submitted for approval before registering, making travel plans, or committing to payment of the course.

**Please see the PD Course Evaluation Package for more information on submitting a course for approval.**

### UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES: IN-PERSON/ONLINE

Type: Primary and Secondary Courses

Credits: 1 hour = 1 primary credit  
2 hours = 1 secondary credit

*There is no cap for the number of credits per cycle that members may earn by completing approved higher education courses.*

The MTAA promotes higher education studies for our members. We understand that some members will choose to complete Bachelor's Degrees during their career and we aim to support them as they undergo this journey. The field of study and more importantly, the course submitted for PD credits must support the therapist's clinical practice as an RMT. Examples of courses that may meet approval conditions: Anatomy and Physiology, Pathology, Clinical Research, Ethics, Marketing, and Business.

Details: All courses must be MTAA approved, or the renewal of a previously approved course must be confirmed before credits will be awarded to members.

**Please see the PD Course Approval Form for more information on submitting a course for approval.**



## **Courses for Other Professional Designations/Certifications**

(i.e. Manual Osteopathic Training, Yoga Teacher Training, etc.)

*A maximum of 15 credits from the Other Professional Designations/Certification category is permitted for each education cycle.*

The MTAA appreciates that some members choose to undergo training in other professions to support their careers and practices.

It is important to note that the field of study and courses submitted for credits must support the therapist's clinical practice as a Massage Therapist. When completing training in another profession, it is highly likely that some courses fall outside of the MTAA Scope of Practice. Due to this, it is incredibly important to seek approval for the course or certification before registering if a therapist is planning to submit the certification for PD credits. The course submitted must be one that teaches the student a technique or modality which can be clearly integrated into the RMT practice of the member.

**IMPORTANT:** Once a course has been evaluated and approved, the member must obtain and submit the full certification before credits will be awarded.

**Credits:** Due to the complex nature of the submissions in this category, credits may not be awarded in the same format as the other course categories. The MTAA reserves the right to assign the number of credits awarded for a course in the Other Professional Designations/Certifications category on a program-by-program basis.

**Details:**

At minimum, all information required for a standard course submission must be provided. Please see the MTAA Course Evaluation Package for all details.

The field of study and more importantly, the course submitted for credits must support the therapist's clinical practice as an RMT.

Some common certification programs may already be approved for a predetermined number of credits by the MTAA, such as the Manual Osteopathic Therapy program from MOCC and some yoga certification programs. In these cases, only a diploma or a letter of completion is required to obtain credits in this category. To confirm whether or not your program of interest is already approved, please search the MTAA PD COURSES tab through your member profile. If you cannot locate it there, please email the MTAA at [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com)

**Please refer to the Other Certification PD Credit Submission Form for more details.**

## INDEPENDENT LEARNING CREDITS

### Case Study

Credits: Primary Case Studies = 10 Primary Credits

*A total of one Case Study may be submitted per each education cycle.*

Case Studies are an excellent way to incorporate professional development into your practice with minimal cost.

Case studies must consist of a minimum of ten treatments, all completed during the current education cycle. Submissions must be provided in an orderly manner following the order of detail indicated on the Case Study form.

Details:

The condition and treatments used throughout the Case Study must be included in the MTAA Scope of Practice. Case Studies must not focus on conditions that are out of scope for the therapist.

The intention of a Case Study is to challenge the therapist to advance their skills and knowledge, identify outcomes that contradict their previous training, and implement their learning into their practices.

**Please refer to the Case Study Submission Form for more details on the requirements of a Case Study.**

## Literature Reviews

Credit Type: Please note only literature reviews based on topics that fall under the Primary credit category will be accepted.

Credits:

Large Literature Review: 100 Pages or more = 4 Primary

Small Literature Review: Less than 100 Pages = 2 Primary

*A maximum of 10 credits may be earned per PD cycle.*

Literature reviews offer members an option to explore areas of interest in a cost and time effective manner.

It is imperative to acknowledge that all Literature Review submissions must be consistent with or relevant to the Scope of Practice of the MTAA. These reviews are intended to allow therapists to determine whether the literature reviewed is evidence-based and give them the ability to identify whether there are any adjustments needed to align their practice with current research.

Details:

Literature reviews consist of the analysis of the following:

- Textbooks used in Massage Therapy programs (if updated since the member's year of graduation)
- Books related to the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy. Examples: Topics such as Ethics, Pathologies, Therapeutic Exercise, and Orthopedic Assessments.
- Peer-Reviewed Research Articles and Studies in direct relation to the practice of Massage Therapy and within the Scope of Practice of the MTAA

When completing a Literature Review the member is given the opportunity to use critical thinking and reflective writing to not only absorb the information read, but to demonstrate a sound understanding of the topic and apply the new knowledge to their practice. A minimum of one page (no less than 300 words) is required for Small Literature Review submissions and a minimum of 2 pages (no less than 600 words) is required for Large Literature Review submissions.

**Please refer to the Literature Review Submission Form for more details on the requirements of these studies.**

## **Additional Independent Learning: Workshops, Seminars, Symposiums, Webinars, and more.**

Credits: Primary Credits = 1 hour = 1 credit

A maximum of 6 Additional Learning credits is allowed per education cycle.

A variety of web-based, in-person forums and training are available for members to foster and expand their skills and knowledge as Massage Therapists. Engaging in group discussions, presentations from industry experts and group training are all excellent ways for Massage Therapists to create a safer and more effective practice.

Details:

The following learning options are available to earn Additional Learning PD credits:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Symposiums
- Webinars
- Educational Videos
- Conferences

**Completing continuing education in the category of Additional Independent Learning does not provide the level of education required to ensure your coverage to practice the technique or modality. Members must complete MTAA approved courses to be eligible for liability coverage as a member to practice.**

Submissions for credits in this category must be in alignment with the Scope of Practice of the MTAA and will be individually reviewed for acceptance on a case-by-case basis. All requirements must be completed and provided as per the Additional Learning Request form.

*Speaker and facilitator qualifications must be obtained to gain approval. Please ensure that you are able to provide this information before deciding to attend a workshop or seminar with the intent of submitting for PD credits.*

**Please refer to the Additional Learning Review Submission Form for more details on the requirements of this category.**

## TEACHING & MENTORING CREDITS

### Teaching at an Educational Institution

Credits: Primary Credits = 1 hour = 1 credit

A maximum of 6 Instructing credits is allowed per education cycle.

Details:

The MTAA is proud to have many members who are involved in the education of future therapists in Alberta. It is exceptional that our members continue to be at the forefront of cultivating an elevated educational landscape for Massage Therapy in our province, and the association recognizes these efforts in the Professional Development Program.

Members who instruct in a Massage Therapy program that wish to obtain PD Credits must ensure:

- Instruction is for a Massage Therapy program at an MTAA approved educational institution.
- The course instructed is within the MTAA Scope of Practice at an approved post-Secondary institution
- The member is providing supervision in a clinic or outreach setting for an MTAA approved Massage Therapy program.

Please Note: Credits are provided only to members instructing at an educational institution that has been approved by the MTAA School Approval Program. For a list of these institutions and to inquire about having the program you teach at approved, please email the MTAA at [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com).

**Please note that the activity of instructing or creating Professional Development courses does not fall under this category and the MTAA does not offer credits for this undertaking.**

**Please refer to the Teaching Credit Submission Form for more details on the requirements of this category.**

## Mentoring

Credits: Primary Credits = 1 hour = 1 credit

A maximum of 6 Mentoring credits is allowed per education cycle.

Details:

Mentoring other Massage Therapists allows for the growth of not only the learner but the mentor as well. The MTAA promotes the act of mentoring by our members as the collaboration of therapists builds strong relationships and encourages the progression of the profession.

Under the MTAA Professional Development Program, mentoring is defined as *a relationship between two Massage Therapists with the goal of professional and personal development.*

Previously defined in the MTAA Professional Development Program as “an activity shadowing or observing another health professionals practice in order to obtain a better understanding of other modalities or to learn new techniques”, the updated definition of mentoring promotes a multifaceted learning environment.

In addition to allowing the shadowing of a practice or the exposure of techniques to another MTAA member, some areas which mentoring may be completed in are:

- Ethical discussion and decision making
- Diversifying a practice
- Exposure to new patient populations
- Charting and documentation support
- Establishing a solo practice or business
- Review of conditions, treatment plans, and outcomes

**Please refer to the Mentoring Credit Submission Form for more details on the requirements of this category.**

## VOLUNTEERING CREDITS

### Non-MTAA Focused Volunteering

Credits:

*The hourly credit allocation for this activity reflects reasonable treatment time at events and is inclusive of therapists who are unable to or choose not to treat for 8 hours at one time.*

Non-MTAA Focused Events = 4 hours = 1 Primary Credit

The maximum number of PD Credits for the activity is 6 per education cycle.

Details:

Volunteering has been shown to not only build stronger relationships within the profession but also with the profession and the community!

Non-MTAA focused Volunteering must involve *acting in the capacity of a Massage Therapist* and working within the MTAA Scope of Practice at all times. Examples of events or places an MTAA member may consider volunteering are:

- Sports events such as marathons, charity runs, or golf tournaments
- Pregnancy support groups
- Special population organizations

Members must complete the MTAA Volunteer Request Form to be considered by the Competence Committee for their donated time. The MTAA expects that all members volunteering at events present themselves as professional health care providers and promote the profession of Massage Therapy in a safe and effective manner.

Please Note: Any events at which the member is compensated, either partially or fully, for their time do not qualify for Professional Development Credits.

**Please refer to the Volunteer Submission Form for more details on the requirements of this category.**

## MTAA Focused Volunteering

Credits:

*The credit allocation for this activity is dependent on the role which the member holds. Please inquire about credits when applying for a volunteer role with the MTAA.*

Details:

Did you know you can gain Professional Development credits by volunteering your time with the MTAA?

There are a variety of opportunities to gain credits, all while supporting the growth of the Massage Therapy Profession! Our volunteers benefit from creating strong relationships with like-minded therapists, are exposed to some of the latest advancements in the field of Massage Therapy, and are leaders in the profession!

Examples of volunteer opportunities with the MTAA are:

- Positions on the Board of Directors
- Committee members
- Volunteering at MTAA events
- MTAA Focus Groups

Please Note: To gain credits for a volunteer role or activity with the MTAA, the member must fully complete the term for the position which they held.

**As the MTAA has shifted many meetings and projects to an online format, volunteer activities with the MTAA have become more accessible. This allows therapists from across Alberta to partake in roles that may have been previously difficult to perform due to travel considerations. Members must have access to ZOOM Meetings to be an MTAA Volunteer.**

If you are ready to assist in growing, promoting, and developing the profession, please reach out today to [info@mtaalberta.com](mailto:info@mtaalberta.com).