

## Hawaii Board of Massage Therapy Frequently Asked Questions & Guidance

**Note:** The answers to general questions (e.g. change of address, name change, duplicate pocket ID/wall certificate, license verification request, etc.) can be found in the Professional and Vocational Licensing ("PVL") division's FAQs: <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/faqs/>

**Please note the following definitions, pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") §452-1:**

"Massage", "massage therapy", and "Hawaiian massage" commonly known as lomilomi, means any method of treatment of the superficial soft parts of the body, consisting of rubbing, stroking, tapotement, pressing, shaking, or kneading with the hands, feet, elbow, or arms, and whether or not aided by any mechanical or electrical apparatus, appliances, or supplementary aids such as rubbing alcohol, liniments, antiseptics, oils, powder, creams, lotions, ointments, or other similar preparations commonly used in this practice. Any mechanical or electrical apparatus used as described in this chapter shall be approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

"Massage therapist" means any person who engages in the occupation or practice of massage for compensation.

"Massage therapist apprentice" means any person who engages in the occupation or practice of massage under the direct supervision of a sponsoring massage therapist who is employed by or registered with an approved massage establishment.

"Massage therapist student" means any person who engages in the study or practice of massage therapy who is under the direct supervision of the teacher in a school setting.

"Massage therapy establishment" means premises occupied and used for the purpose of practicing massage therapy or massage therapy training; provided that when any massage therapy establishment is situated in any building used for residential purposes, the massage therapy establishment premises shall be set apart and shall not be used for any other purpose.

"Principal massage therapist" means a massage therapist designated by an establishment or an out-call massage service as the person in charge.

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### GENERAL QUESTIONS – APPLICATION PROCESS

#### 1. How long is the application processing timeline?

Applications currently take a minimum of 45 to 60 business days to process. If an application is deficient (e.g. documents missing, Board requests additional clarification, etc.), this may delay the processing timeline. We cannot continue processing applications until all deficiencies are remedied.

#### 2. Can I expedite my application?

There is no option to expedite an application. All applications are reviewed in the order in which they are received.

### 3. Can I submit online?

Yes, you may submit online by creating a “MyPVL” account: <https://mypvl.dcca.hawaii.gov/>. If you submit your application online, there is also an option for online payment.

You may alternatively submit hard-copies of the application, supplementary materials, and check payment to our office by mailing:

DCCA-PVL  
Attn: Massage  
P.O. Box 3469  
Honolulu, HI 96801

Check payable to: “Commerce & Consumer Affairs”

### 4. Where can I access the application form?

Application form and supplemental verification forms can be downloaded as PDFs on our website: [https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/application\\_publications/](https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/application_publications/)

### 5. How long do I have to complete the application process?

Pursuant to HRS section 436B-9, your application shall be considered abandoned and shall be destroyed if you fail to complete the licensure process **within one (1) year after filing an application** or fail to take and pass the examination after becoming eligible to take the examination.

If an application is deemed abandoned, you are required to re-apply for licensure and meet the licensing requirements at the time of re-application.

### 6. I’m already licensed in another state. How do I transfer my license to Hawaii or apply by reciprocity?

Your out-of-state license **CANNOT** be transferred to Hawaii. Hawaii does **not** license by reciprocity. Even if you hold a license in another jurisdiction, all applicants must still submit a Hawaii application form, fees, and related documents and meet the Hawaii requirements for hours, exam, etc.

Please be reminded that all states have their own licensing authority and governing laws/rules over the profession. Requirements may vary state by state, sometimes significantly.

### 7. What license types does the Board offer?

You may apply with the Board for the following license types:

- MAT – Massage Therapist

- MAE – Massage Establishment (including sole proprietorship)
- MAP – Massage Apprentice Permit

## 8. Will the Board credit my foreign education/training?

All documents must be in English only. Documents that are in a foreign language must be translated into English. The translator must be someone other than the applicant. The translator must also submit an affidavit, which must be signed before a notary public.

An example of the translator's affidavit is as follows: "I swear that I am competent in both the English language and the (language of the document) language and that this is a true and complete translation of the foreign language original."

Additionally, the applicant must submit documentation in English verifying that the foreign school was accrediting by the appropriate accrediting body for the foreign jurisdiction.

Note that submission of translated documents does not guarantee that the Board will accept the foreign education/training for licensure, apprenticeship, and/or exam approval.

## 9. How much are the fees\*?

### Application fees (non-refundable):

- \$50 (MAT)
- \$50 (MAP)
- \$25 (MAE)
- \$50 (Massage Workshop)
- \$50 (HIDOE Curriculum Approval Letter)

### Licensure fees (assessed only if your application is approved):

- Massage Therapist (MAT):
  - If your license is issued between July 1 of an even-numbered year and June 30 of an odd-numbered year, licensure fee is **\$164**
  - If your license is issued between July 1 of an odd-numbered year and June 30 of an even-numbered year, licensure fee is **\$82**
- Massage Establishment (MAE):
  - If your license is issued between July 1 of an even-numbered year and June 30 of an odd-numbered year, licensure fee is **\$189**
  - If your license is issued between July 1 of an odd-numbered year and June 30 of an even-numbered year, licensure fee is **\$107**
- Massage Apprentice (MAP) – no licensure fee

### Exam fees:

- Exam fee of \$90 must be paid directly to the exam proctor (PSI) upon registration (additional \$90 for each subsequent re-examination)

*\*All fees are subject to change.*

**10. Where can I find the licensing law (HRS) and administrative rules (HAR)?**

Licensing laws and administrative rules for the EASLA Board can be found on our website:

[https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/statute\\_rules/](https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/statute_rules/)

**11. The information in your application form/website/laws and rules differs from the information on available on a different website.**

Please be reminded that the Board's laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes) and rules (Hawaii Administrative Rules) are the governing authority over licensure and the profession in Hawaii. You should always contact the Board directly to verify licensing requirements.

While the Board is a member of certain national organizations, these organizations do not have the authority to determine licensing requirements in the State. While we do our best to collaborate and provide the most up-to-date information on their websites, licensing laws/rules and other policies may change before those websites can be appropriately updated. Again, you should always contact the Board directly to verify licensing requirements for the state in which you are applying.

**12. How do I check on the status of my application?**

If you submit an online application, you can track your application through the application process through your MyPVL account.

You may also contact the Licensing Branch by calling (808) 586-3000 or by emailing the Board at [massage@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:massage@dcca.hawaii.gov). Our normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 7:45a.m. to 4:30p.m. Hawaii Standard Time.

Please provide your full, legal first and last name, and confirm the last 4 digits of your SSN for privacy and security purposes.

Note that will not disclose any information about your application to any other individual unless they are listed as an authorized third party.

**13. Someone will be helping me with my application. How do I authorize them?**

Please be sure to fill out and sign the last page of the application form if you would like to designate "authorized third parties." We will not disclose any information about your application to any other individual unless they are listed as an authorized third party.

If you would like to add an authorized third-party mid-way through the application process, please complete and sign the last page of the application form and email it to [massage@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:massage@dcca.hawaii.gov).

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS – AFTER LICENSURE

### 1. After licensure, how often do I have to renew?

Massage Therapist (MAT) and Massage Establishment (MAE) license must be renewed by June 30 of every even-numbered year, regardless of date of initial licensure.

A notice of renewal will be sent to your mailing address on file approximately two months prior to the renewal deadline as a courtesy reminder. **However, it is every licensee's sole responsibility to timely renew their license.** The Board is not responsible for late or no renewal and it is impossible for our office to track whether the renewal postcards are received once they leave our office.

### 2. Are there Continuing Education ("CE") requirements for renewal?

MAT licensees are required to complete at least 12 total CE hours per each licensing biennium, of which two (2) shall be first aid, CPR, or other emergency-related courses. The remaining 10 CEs must be in subjects directly related to the practice of massage therapy.

Practice-building courses (e.g. marketing strategies, increasing clients, website design, etc.) will not be credited.

The Board is authorized to conduct a random audit of licensees after each renewal deadline to determine compliance with the CE requirements for the previous licensure biennium. Licensees selected for audit will be notified in writing of how to verify compliance.

Please see the Board's website for additional information on CE requirements:  
[https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/news-releases/massage\\_important\\_announcement/](https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/news-releases/massage_important_announcement/).

### 3. I did not renew my license. How do I restore it?

Licenses that are not renewed by June 30 of every even-numbered year become forfeited. A forfeited license may be restored within one (1) year of the forfeiture. You may **not** practice in Hawaii with a forfeited Hawaii license.

To restore a license, you may call the Licensing Branch at (808) 586-3000 Monday through Friday between 7:45a.m. and 4:30p.m., Hawaii Standard Time or email the Board at [massage@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:massage@dcca.hawaii.gov) and request for a restoration application form to be sent to you. The restoration application must be mailed to our office with payment.

**Note:** You will also be required to submit certificates of completion to verify 12 CE's (2 in CPR/first aid + 10 in massage therapy courses), regardless of the date of initial Hawaii licensure.

#### 4. Can I place my license on "inactive" status?

To place your MAT or MAE license on "inactive" status, you must submit the "Inactivation" application available on the Board's website. You may not practice on inactive status. Inactive licenses must still be renewed by the renewal deadline; however, CE's are not required while on inactive status.

If you would like to reactivate your application in the future, you must submit the "Reactivation" application available on the Board's website.

Please contact our office by emailing [massage@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:massage@dcca.hawaii.gov) if you would like to voluntarily surrender your license.

Otherwise, if you do not renew by the renewal deadline and do not subsequently restore within the restoration deadline, your license will be considered "forfeit" in our system.

#### 5. I had a license that expired, and I did not renew or restore it. How do I get licensed again?

Your license is considered "forfeit" in our system. You will need to re-apply as a "new" applicant by re-submitting the application form, fees, and related documents. You must meet the requirements at the time of re-application, including re-taking the state exam for MAT licensure.

If your re-application is approved, you will be given your original license number.

#### 6. Where do I get my wall certificate and pocket ID after licensure?

Our office does not mail or email out wall certificates or pocket IDs. All licensees may self-print both documents online via their MyPVL account: <https://mypvl.dcca.hawaii.gov/>

#### 7. How do I verify my Hawaii license?

Until you receive an actual license number, you may **NOT** practice in the State of Hawaii.

Verification of licenses can be done on-line at no cost using our license search site at: <https://pvl.ehawaii.gov/pvlsearch>. You or the requesting agency will be able to obtain information such as original license date, license expiration date, license status, disciplinary action, etc. The information downloaded from this site is official license information which state boards or other individuals can download for themselves.

If the above is not acceptable, please submit a written request that includes the complete address or email address of the location that the verification is to be mailed to along with a \$15 fee (check payable to *Commerce and Consumer Affairs*)

Mailing Address:           Licensing Branch – License Verification  
                                  P.O. Box 3469  
                                  Honolulu, HI 96801

Please allow 20 business days from the receipt of your request for PVL standard verification reports to be mailed out.

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## MESSAGE THERAPIST (MAT) EXAM APPROVAL & LICENSE

### 1. What are the requirements for MAT licensure in Hawaii?

All applicants are required to:

- a) Submit documentation verifying they have met the minimum education and training hours requirement of a total of 570 hours; including at least:
  - a. 50 hours of anatomy, physiology, and structural kinesiology;
  - b. 100 hours of theory and demonstration; and
  - c. 420 hours of supervised practical massage training; and
- b) Pass the State of Hawaii licensure examination; and
- c) Submit current infant and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) certification from the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association

More specific information can be found on the instructions attached to the application form available online: [https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/application\\_publications/](https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/application_publications/)

### 2. Do I have to attend massage therapist school in Hawaii?

All applicants are required to meet a minimum of 570 hours of education and training to qualify for MAT exam and licensure. You may meet these requirements by:

- a) Attending and successfully completing an **in-state Hawaii massage therapy program** licensed by the Hawaii Department of Education (“HIDOE”); or
- b) Attending and successfully completing a **massage therapy program out-of-state** in a school that was licensed/registered/certified by the state department of education in the respective jurisdiction or by an agency authorized by the appropriate government agency of the respective jurisdiction in which you studied; or
- c) Successfully completing a Board-approved Hawaii apprenticeship program for 420 practical hours **AND** completing the academic course of study for 50 hours APK and 100 hours theory through an approved massage school or Board-approved workshop(s).

**Note:** Apprenticeship training obtained in other out-of-state jurisdictions are NOT accepted towards Hawaii licensure requirements.

**3. My education and training is “short” the required hours for Hawaii licensure. What are my options for remediating those hours?**

To remediate hours “short” in APK (50) or Theory (100), you have the following options:

- Board-approved massage workshop (list of approved workshops available on the Board’s website: <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/>)
- Enroll in a Hawaii HIDOE-licensed massage school
- Enroll in an out-of-state accredited massage school

To remediate hours “short” in Practical (420) you have the following options:

- Enroll in a Hawaii HIDOE-licensed massage school
- Enroll in an out-of-state accredited massage school
- Apply with the Hawaii Board for a board-approved massage apprenticeship

**Note:** Continuing education (CEs) are not accepted to remediate APK, Theory, or Practical hours.

**4. Can I count work experience towards required education and training hours?**

No. Work experience cannot be counted towards required education and training hours for the exam, apprenticeship permit, or MAT licensure.

**5. I took and passed the licensing exam for my other state license or the MBLEx exam. Will Hawaii accept my passing score as a substitute for the Hawaii exam?**

No. Passing MBLEx scores or scores from other states’ licensing exams are not accepted in lieu of the Hawaii State Exam.

All applicants for a Hawaii massage therapist license are required to take and successfully pass the Hawaii State Massage License Exam.

**6. I am nationally certified. Will Hawaii accept my national certificate for licensure?**

No. Your national certificate will not be accepted to meet Hawaii’s licensing requirements. All applicants are required to meet Hawaii’s licensing requirements at the time of application.

**7. I am nationally certified. Do I have to take the Hawaii exam?**

All applicants are required to take and successfully pass the Hawaii State Massage License Exam, regardless of other exams passed or national certification.

**8. I don’t know if my education and training meet Hawaii’s requirements. Who may I talk with to find out if I meet Hawaii’s requirements?**



If you would like to have your education and training reviewed, you must submit a completed massage therapist application form, application fee, and all required documentation.

A review will be conducted of your documents, and you will be notified in writing of the Board's evaluation of your education and training upon review.

#### **9. When can I sit for the Hawaii massage exam?**

All individuals who wish to sit for the Hawaii massage exam must be pre-approved by the Board before they can register to test. Passage of the Hawaii massage exam is a requirement for all applicants, regardless of licensure in another jurisdiction or national certification.

You must submit an application form, fees, and supporting documentation to the Board. Upon review of your materials, if approved, an exam approval will be mailed or emailed to the address/email address of record. You will need to register and pay the exam fee directly with the exam provider. As of January 2023, the exam provider is PSI, Inc.

For more information regarding the exam, including registration, see the Candidate Information Bulletin ("CIB") at: <https://test-takers.psiexams.com/hitrade/test/FMB9694A> (CIB available for download on the right hand-side of the webpage, above the box detailing exam fees).

You may NOT register for the exam until you receive exam approval from the Board's office.

#### **10. How do I prepare for the State exam? What study materials are available?**

The only exam information materials provided to candidates is the Candidate Information Bulletin ("CIB") available for download on the PSI website: <https://test-takers.psiexams.com/hitrade/test/FMB9694A>.

#### **11. Can I take the exam out-of-state?**

Exam availability is typically available year-round at testing centers throughout the US. However, exam availability is at the sole discretion of PSI. Please contact PSI directly for exam availability and testing locations.

#### **12. Can I get my exam score over the phone/via email?**

The Board does not send out exam scores, nor does the Board give exam results over the phone or via email. PSI, the exam provider, sends the exam results directly to the applicants.

For questions regarding your exam results, please contact PSI directly.

#### **13. I passed the Hawaii State exam. What are my next steps for MAT licensure?**

Once you receive a “pass” result from PSI, you will also be sent a “fee form” from PSI with instructions on payment to the Board’s office of final licensure fees.

Note that these final licensure fees are separate from the non-refundable application fees that you paid upfront upon submittal of your initial application. Once licensure fees are received, your license can be issued.

Please contact the Board if you have not received your fee form from PSI within 10 business days of receiving your official “pass” results.

**14. I was previously licensed as a Hawaii MAT, but my MAT license is currently forfeit. I would like to reapply. Do I need to re-take the Hawaii State exam?**

If your license is “forfeit” and you have passed the restoration deadline, you will need to reapply for MAT licensure, resubmitting the application form, fees, and supplemental documentation. You will also need to retake the MAT exam.

The Board will only consider a request for exam waiver for those individuals who were previously licensed as an MAT in Hawaii, and who have held continuous massage therapist license in another jurisdiction continuously from the time their Hawaii MAT license expired. Proof of continuous licensure must be submitted for the Board to consider the request.

Note that submittal of an exam waiver request does not guarantee that the exam waiver request will be approved. If not approved for exam waiver, you are required to pass the Hawaii State massage exam again.

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## **MESSAGE THERAPIST APPRENTICE (MAP) PERMIT**

**1. Where can I find a list of Board-approved apprenticeship programs?**

There are no “Board approved” apprenticeship programs. The Board does not have the authority to approve apprenticeship programs. The Board only approves permits for individuals to practice massage therapist as an apprentice under the supervision of a sponsoring Hawaii licensed massage therapist.

**2. If there are no approved apprenticeship programs, how do I complete a Hawaii apprenticeship?**

Even though there are no approved apprenticeship programs, the Board’s administrative rules set forth the course of study that an apprentice shall complete (HAR §16-84-23(j)).

The apprentice trains under the direct supervision of a sponsoring massage therapist. The sponsoring therapist shall have a current Hawaii massage therapist license. The apprenticeship shall be conducted in a Hawaii licensed massage therapy establishment.

### 3. How long is the apprenticeship permit valid for?

Apprenticeship permit is valid for 1 year from the date of issuance. Apprenticeship training shall be completed no sooner than six (6) months and shall not go longer than 1 year from the date of issuance.

Apprenticeship training shall only be conducted within the State of Hawaii. Apprenticeship programs or training completed out-of-state do not qualify.

### 4. When can I start the apprenticeship?

You must first complete the academic course of study of 50 hours in APK, and 100 hours of Theory and Demonstration of massage therapy.

After obtaining certificates of completion and/or official transcripts from a licensed/accredited massage school and/or Board-approved massage workshop, you can submit an application for apprentice permit (MAP).

You may only begin your apprenticeship once your application has been approve and your sponsor receives the apprentice permit.

### 5. How do I obtain the 50 hours in anatomy, physiology, and structural kinesiology (APK) and 100 hours of Theory and Demonstration of massage?

To obtain the required hours for the academic course of study required for MAP permit and MAT licensure, you may consider:

- a) Attending and successfully completing an **in-state Hawaii massage therapy program** licensed by the Hawaii Department of Education ("HIDOE"); or
- b) Attending and successfully completing a **massage therapy program out-of-state** in a school that was licensed/registered/certified by the state department of education in the respective jurisdiction or by an agency authorized by the appropriate government agency of the respective jurisdiction in which you studied; or
- c) Attending and successfully completing Board-approved massage workshop(s)

### 6. Is there a list of Board-approved massage therapist that hold apprenticeship training programs or who sponsor apprentices?

No. There is no list of approved massage therapists or program.

### 7. Will the Board assign me to a sponsoring therapist for my apprenticeship?

No. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to locate a massage therapist who meets the sponsor requirements and is willing to allow you to apprentice under them.

**8. If there is no list and the Board will not assign me to a sponsoring therapist, how do I know whether the massage therapist is authorized to train me?**

The sponsoring massage therapist must possess at least three (3) years of massage therapist licensure in Hawaii; employed by or registered with a licensed massage therapy establishment; and must maintain an active license throughout the sponsorship period. In addition, all training must be conducted at a Hawaii licensed massage therapy establishment and the principal massage therapist of that establishment must authorize the apprentice training.

Ask the prospective sponsoring massage therapist for their MAT license number. Ask to see the licenses of the massage therapy establishment (MAE) and the principal massage therapist (MAT license). You may also visit our website to verify that the licenses of the individuals and massage therapy establishment are current and in good standing: <https://mypvl.dcca.hawaii.gov/public-license-search/>.

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## **MESSAGE ESTABLISHMENT (MAE) LICENSURE**

**1. Do I need an MAE license for my business?**

A “Massage Therapy Establishment” or “MAE” is defined as premises occupied and used for the purpose of practicing massage or massage therapy training

No massage therapy establishment shall be licensed or allowed to operate unless the massage business is under the direct managed of a Hawaii license massage therapist who is designated as the principal massage therapist and whose name has been recorded with the Board’s office.

**2. I already have an MAE license, but I’m moving to another location. Will my current license cover this new location?**

No. MAE licenses are not transferable to a new location. You must file a “Relocation” application available on our website and obtain approval before opening at this new location and engaging in massage therapy services.

**3. Do I need an MAE license if I want to work out of my home?**

Yes. An MAE application must be filed and all requirements met. If an MAE is situated in any building used for residential therapy purposes, the massage therapy establishment premises shall be set apart and shall not be used for any other purpose.

**4. I already have an MAE license and will be selling my business. Can the new owner operate at the current location under my license?**

No. An MAE license is not transferable to a new owner. The new owner must apply for a new MAE license.

**5. I will not be an employee of the MAE, but I would like to perform massage therapy services. Do I need an MAE license?**

Yes. As an independent contractor and if the client is coming to you for massage therapy services in a fixed location, you need to obtain an MAE license, in addition to your MAT license. You do not need an MAE license if you are only doing outcalls (i.e. going to the location of the client).

**6. Do I need an MAE license if performing massage therapy services every week at a farmer's market?**

Yes. An AME license is required if massage therapy services are performed on a regular basis (e.g. open-air markets, farmer's markets, swap meets, flea, markets, etc.)

**7. When do I need to notify the Board of any changes to the Principal Massage Therapist ("PMT") or other massage therapist personnel associated with the MAE?**

Please complete and submit the "Change of Personnel" form available on the Board's website to report all changes, additions, or terminations of your PMT and any changes, additions, or terminations of any MAT employed or terminated by, or associated with, the MAE.

All changes in personnel must be reported to the Board in writing within 48 hours of the change on the "Change of Personnel for Massage Therapy Establishments" form (MA-12).

The form can be submitted via email to [message@dcca.hawaii.gov](mailto:message@dcca.hawaii.gov) or hard-copy via mail to our office.

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## **MESSAGE THERAPY WORKSHOP**

**1. Where can I find a list of Board-approved workshops?**

The list of approved workshops can be found on the Board's website:  
<https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/massage/>.

Click on the "Massage Therapy Workshops" link. For more information on the workshops, please contact the MAEs directly.

**2. How do I apply to conduct a Board-approved workshop?**

You must submit a completed application and receive approval from the Board. The application can be found on the Board's website.

**3. What are the requirements to teach a Board-approved workshop?**

Pursuant to HAR 16-84-23(i), Board-approved workshops shall be taught by:

- A massage therapist who has been licensed for at least three (3) years and who has received approval from the Board;
- MAT must maintain continuous licensure throughout the duration of the workshop; and
- Must be employed by or affiliated with the MAE where the workshop will take place

#### **4. What are the requirements for content of a Board-approved workshop?**

No practical training may be included in the workshop curriculum.

The course content of the workshop shall be as follows:

- Anatomy, physiology, and structural kinesiology (maximum 50 hours)
- Theory and demonstration of massage (maximum 100 hours)

**Note:** Workshop training is a pathway toward partial qualification for licensure and is limited only to the academic course of study and not the practical/supervised clinical training.