



Massage Therapy Certificate  
Program Student Handbook  
2024-2025



Welcome!

Thank you for selecting River Valley Community College (RVCC) as your educational path to becoming a Massage Therapist. We are excited that you are joining our community of passionate learners.

The RVCC Massage Program continually strives to improve to provide you with the best education and tools so that you will have a successful and meaningful career. Our instructors are practicing massage therapists with many years of experience between them.

Massage Therapy is an art and a science. Your education will provide you with a solid knowledge of the human body and spectrum of massage modalities. Your instructors will encourage you to synthesize all learning into your unique “art of massage”.

During your time at RVCC you will have fun, make friends, and learn a great deal. You will also work very hard! Remember that you are not alone on this journey. The staff and faculty at RVCC are committed to helping you succeed. Do not hesitate to reach out. We can provide support, advice and even arrange for free weekly tutoring.

Here is a bit of advice: Jump right in! We (students and faculty) are a community of like-minded people that can explore and learn together.

Time will fly by and before you know it you will have a meaningful career helping people and making the world a better place.

Best wishes on your journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Jacovina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Jacovina, LMT  
Program Director, Massage Therapy

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## **About River Valley Community College:**

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Since 1968, our college has provided quality education in an academic environment small enough to allow individualized attention. Students in the college's career-oriented degree, diploma and certificate programs gain highly specialized skills and knowledge necessary to confidently and successfully enter the job market in a number of technical, business and health-oriented fields. It is the student with career goals clearly in mind who tends to excel and enjoy the educational experience at RVCC. River Valley Community College (RVCC) is one of a system of seven community colleges in the state, collectively referred to as the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH). RVCC has campus locations in Claremont, NH, in Lebanon, NH, and Keene, NH. The Massage Therapy Program is currently housed at both the Lebanon and Keene locations. The college is accessible to the physically challenged. The college views itself as serving the needs of both the region and the state. It cooperates with local industry, business, service and health organizations to meet those needs. The college's expected outcomes are found at the following link: <https://www.rivervalley.edu/about/river-valley-principles/>

## **System and College Guiding Statements:**

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The Massage Therapy program supports both the mission of the Community College System, and the mission (and philosophy) of the college.

## **Mission Statement of RVCC:**

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River Valley Community College transforms lives by providing a quality and affordable education through innovative personal approaches to lifelong learning and career pathways.

## **Mission Statement of CCSNH:**

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Our purpose is to provide residents with affordable, accessible education and training that aligns with the needs of New Hampshire's businesses and communities, delivered through an innovative, efficient and collaborative system of colleges. CCSNH is dedicated to the educational, professional and personal success of its students; a skilled workforce for our state's businesses; and a strong New Hampshire economy.

## **The College's Education Philosophy:**

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Since the College serves a diverse student population possessing a wide range of academic and physical abilities, the College is committed to providing a variety of educational approaches, instructional methods, supplementary services, and co-curricular activities to meet those diverse needs. In the context of a student-centered environment, the primary aim of the college is to assist students to become self-reliant, self-confident skilled workers and educated persons. The College believes that the educated person is able to read critically, write clearly, and comprehensively, reason analytically, and utilize mathematical and scientific skills to solve life's problems. The educated person functions as a responsible and ethical member of society, recognizes and copes with ambiguities of life, and appreciates diversity. The educated person moves from concrete to abstract levels of thinking, fosters integration and synthesis of knowledge, interchanges roles as both learner and teacher, and utilizes contemplative thought.

By embracing an understanding and appreciation of self in today's socially and technologically complex world, and through the stimulation of intellectual curiosity, learners will be able to improve their lives and contribute something of value to the community of which they are a part.

## **College Accreditation:**

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The College is accredited through the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE).

To learn more about RVCC's accreditation status and process, please visit

<https://www.rivervalley.edu/about/accreditation/> .

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination:**

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The Massage Therapy Program follows the Non-Discrimination policy of CCSNH found here: <https://www.ccsnh.edu/non-discrimination-policy/>

The Community College System of NH does not discriminate in the administration of its admissions and educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, gender identity and expression, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or marital status.

This statement is a reflection of the mission of the Community College System of NH and refers to, but is not limited to, the provisions of the following laws:

- Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1967 (ADEA)
- Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974
- NH Law Against Discrimination (RSA 354-A)
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Inquiries regarding discrimination may be directed to the following:

**Jennifer Cournoyer**, Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs

River Valley Community College

One College Place

Claremont, NH 03743

[jcournoyer@ccsnh.edu](mailto:jcournoyer@ccsnh.edu)

603-542-7744 ext. 5331

**Sara A. Sawyer**, Director of Human Resources

CCSNH

26 College Drive

Concord, NH

[ssawyer@ccsnh.edu](mailto:ssawyer@ccsnh.edu)

603-230-3503

US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights

J.W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse, Room 701, 01-0061

Boston, MA. 02109-4557

[ocr\\_boston@ed.gov](mailto:ocr_boston@ed.gov)

617-223-9662,

FAX: 617-223-9669

TDD:617-223-9695

NH Commission for Human Rights

2 Chennell Drive, Concord, NH 03301 603-271-2767

FAX: 603-271-6339

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission JFK

Federal Building

475 Government Center

Boston, MA, 02203

617-565-3200 or 1-800-669-4000

FAX: 617-565-3196

TTY: 617-565-3204 or 1-800-669-6820

### **Chain of Command:**

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It is the goal of the Massage Therapy Certificate Program at RVCC to provide a safe and positive environment that is conducive to learning. If a student should happen to have a question or



concern, the Massage Therapy Certificate Program encourages the student to follow the chain of command:

- Class/Clinical Instructor/Faculty Member
- Clinical Coordinator
- Program Director
- Chair of Rehab Department
- V.P of Academic and Students Affair
- College President

### **Introduction To The Massage Therapy Certificate Program:**

Welcome to the Massage Therapy Certificate Program at River Valley Community College. Please use this handbook in conjunction with the College student handbook and Catalog.

This document is to be used as a reference and a guide for the student during their time in the program. RVCC values every student who attends the College and respects every student's rights and privileges. If, for any reason, routine progression through the program is interrupted, policies in the Student Handbook and College Catalog at the time of readmission will apply.

Your input as a student, and later as a graduate, is equally important to this Program, College, and Community. Each person at the College is committed to your success – as a student, a professional, and most importantly, as an individual. If you need additional assistance, our doors are always open to you.

### **Massage Therapy Program Mission:**

To develop and advance the art, science and practice of therapeutic massage while instilling academic integrity in a caring, professional and ethical manner. Students enrolled in the program will be prepared to become lifelong learners seeking to balance professional expertise and personal growth. Graduates will enter the community and work force as trained professionals striving to meet the needs of a diverse society. As licensed massage therapists, our graduates will touch lives and be engaged local and global citizens.

### **RVCC Massage Therapy Certificate Program Goals:**

Students will integrate science, creativity, knowledge, strong interpersonal skills, entrepreneurship, sensitivity, and compassion to become a successful massage therapist.

## Preparation for the Massage Therapy Program:

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River Valley wants you to be successful in the Massage Therapy program. In order to be successful, it will be important to prepare for the first semester and beyond. Please review the following expectations and tips.

- Purchase text books, supplies, and review materials before the first class.
- Homework, reading, test preparation, and studying will be part of all courses. Please manage your time to complete assignments outside of the classroom.
- RVCC has resources to help you with study skills and time management. If you feel overwhelmed, reach out to the Library by visiting this link, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/tutoring/> for a list of helpful workshops.
- Become comfortable using your computer, Zoom, and explore Canvas. If you need a computer, please contact to the library to discuss loaner laptop availability and other helpful resources. <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/puksta-library/>
- Review the types of classes you are signed up for. RVCC offers in-person, hybrid, synchronous, and asynchronous. Review these course offerings on page 14 and 15.
- Meet with your academic advisor! Proper planning will help you be successful. Reach out and talk with your advisor about course planning and ask questions. Advisors are here to help.
- Please note the following:
  - By the beginning of October, you will need to purchase a massage table; information will be provided to you by your program director
  - You should purchase and keep with you a nail clipper and nail files. Nail care is an important part of massage therapy and it will be important for the health and safety of your clients to follow the program nail policies
  - You will be required to have a professional massage as part of the program, you will need to pay for this out of pocket, but the school will provide you with area therapists who provide discounts to students.

## Program Outcomes:

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The RVCC Massage Therapy Program will:

- a. Expose students to the wide variety of skills and content that encompass the art and science of massage

- b. Graduate students who exceed the requirements of content mastery, and are eligible for, licensure in the State of NH.
- c. Graduate students who are employed at their desired level of work within six months of program completion.
- d. Through the student massage clinic, provide massage to community members who may not otherwise have access to body work
- e. Educate professionals who understand the value of community service within the massage community.

**Massage Therapy Benchmarks:**

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The Massage Therapy Program benchmarks are as follows:

- 1) First Semester – Demonstrate a full body Swedish massage and earn a passing grade in Human Body One.
- 2) Second Semester – Demonstrate skills need to provide an Outcome based massage, to include assessments, treatment planning, outcome-based massage and documentation, as well as working knowledge of the muscles and their motions. Students must perform a minimum of 75 hours of hands on massage.
- 3) Third Semester – Demonstrate proper application of deep tissue massage and myofascial release as well as the cautions and contraindications for common pathologies. Students must perform a minimum of 45 hours of massage at their Practicum site.

**Program Requirements:**

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The State of New Hampshire Requirements: 750 hours.

<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>Hours</u></b>
Anatomy and physiology	150 hours
History, theory, practice, benefits, and contraindications of massage therapy, related modalities, and adjunct therapies within the scope of practice of a massage therapist, including Swedish massage and hydrotherapy	375 hours

Training in hygiene/sanitary practices, to include blood-borne pathogen standards. Adult CPR and first aid, documented by current certification in each area	50 hours
Health services management, business practices, and ethics of massage	50 hours
Verifiably documented practical hours	125 hours

**RVCC Massage Therapy Curriculum: 848 hours**

***Full Time – 1-year option (3 semesters)***

**Fall Semester – 12 credits**

Basic Massage Theory & Application and Human Body I\*  
 Massage Essentials, Introduction to Massage Modalities I  
 Massage Rules and Ethics

**Spring Semester- 12 credits**

Intermediate Massage Theory & Application and Human Body II\*  
 Massage Professional Experience, Massage Business Practices I  
 Introduction to Massage Modalities II

**Summer Semester – 12 credits**

Advanced Massage Theory and Application Human Body III\*  
 Massage Business Practices II, Massage Capstone, Massage Practicum

**36 Credits Total**

***Part Time – 2-year option (6 semesters)***

**First Year, Fall Semester – 6 credits**

Basic Massage Theory and Application Human Body I\*

**Spring Semester – 6 credits**

Intermediate Massage Theory and Application Human Body II\*

**Summer Semester – 6 credits**

Advanced Massage Theory and Application Human Body III\*

**Second Year, Fall Semester – 6 credits**

Massage Essentials  
 Introduction to Massage Modalities I  
 Massage Rules and Ethics

**Spring Semester- 6 credits** Introduction to Massage Modalities II

Business Practices I, Massage Clinical Experience

**Summer Semester- 6 credits** Massage Business Practices II, Massage Capstone, Massage Practicum

## 36 Credits Total

### **Important Course and Program notes:**

- A&P I&II or Human Biology may be taken in place of Human Body I, Kinesiology may be taken in place of Human Body II and Clinical Conditions may be taken in place of Human Body III for those massage students Pursuing an Associate's Degree, PTA, OTA or desiring more in-depth content for potential transferability.
- The Massage Therapy Certificate Program must be completed within 3 years.

### **Massage Therapy Program Expenses:**

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The Massage Therapy Certificate Program expenses total \$9278.00. This includes the cost of courses, fees, and lab expenses. To view the breakdown of cost, please visit this page

<https://www.rivervalley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Massage-Therapy-Certificate.pdf>

### **Certification and Licensing Information:**

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Following completion of your academic and fieldwork preparation of this program you will be eligible to take the computerized national **Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (Mblex)** offered upon application and self-selected exam date each year. Upon graduating from the program, passing the Mblex and obtaining a certification in CPR/First Aid, you will be eligible to apply for a New Hampshire Massage Therapy License. More information about Mblex can be found here, <https://www.fsmtb.org/mblex/> . The New Hampshire Board of Professional Licensure, <https://www.oplc.nh.gov/advisory-board-massage-therapists> .

### **RVCC MASSAGE THERAPY CERTIFICATE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

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### **Curriculum Design:**

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The curriculum of the program was designed using the Entry Level Analysis Project (ELAP) as a guide. The program strives to provide the community with an affordable and accessible 12 or 24

month educational program where students master an entry level massage therapy education. All students must complete the curriculum within three years' period from the date of matriculation. Upon successful completion of the program students will receive a Certificate of Massage Therapy from RVCC.

## **Academic Integrity:**

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Students at River Valley Community College are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Since the assignments, papers, computer programs, tests, and discussions of college course work are the core of the educational process, RVCC demands the strictest honesty of students in their various academic tasks. To ensure that the standards of honesty essential to meaningful academic accomplishments are maintained, the college sets forth the following clarification of academic dishonesty and sanctioning procedures. This policy relates to all academic endeavors on or off campus (i.e. classroom, clinical, and work sites). The Program follows the College policy on Academic Dishonesty. Please refer to the RVCC student handbook. <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/academic-integrity> for more information about academic integrity.

## **Instructional Methods:**

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- Each course will follow an outline / syllabus and most classroom presentations include lectures, discussion, case studies, audiovisual material, reading and other assignments.
- Each course will be evaluated by different methods including written and practical exams, quizzes, oral presentations, projects, etc.
- The program will follow the college calendar for final exams.
- Educational resources are available through the college library and student's success center. The college has available computer labs for students use.
- Most required and recommended textbooks for the program are available at the college bookstore. Many of these books are used in more than one course. Because of this and because of the need for study references in preparation for the Mblex certification exam, students are advised to keep all the books for future reference.

All information about courses can be found on the college's published schedules. Course schedules show dates, times, campus locations, room number, and modality of instruction of courses. Course schedules are posted on the college website: <https://www.rivervalley.edu/admissions/course-schedules/> and each student can access their individual schedule through the Student Information System (SIS).

The following terminology is used to describe the modality of instruction of courses offered at RVCC:

- **Online:** This course is offered as a traditional online course in an asynchronous manner and will not meet face to face. The syllabus and all course material will be posted in Canvas (the Learning Management System used by RVCC) in the course “shell”. This format requires the student to be hyper-responsible to stay on track.
- **Synchronous Online:** This course is offered in the online environment but on a set schedule where you will log into a virtual classroom via Zoom meetings at the time listed on the college schedule/syllabus. Invitations to classroom meetings will be sent by the professor or linked in the Canvas shell. For example, if you have a Synchronously Online course that meets on Monday’s from 8 – 10 AM, you should be prepared to log into the class Zoom link and be seated in the virtual classroom as if you were attending the lecture in a traditional classroom setting.
- **Hybrid:** This course meets partially via face to face meetings as listed with the remainder of the content being delivered via an online learning management system.
- **Claremont/Keene/Lebanon:** If a town is listed as the modality, this means that the course meets in a traditional face to face, in-person fashion at the location listed.

## **Student Records:**

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All student’s records are maintained in accordance with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. All records are considered confidential and will not be revealed to any unauthorized person without the students’ knowledge and written consent.

The student has the right to inspect all records kept related to them, as dictated by the Federal Family Education Rights. FERPA form must be signed prior to first clinical site and then initially for each subsequent clinical rotation. For more information regarding FERPA, please visit RVCC’s consumer information page, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/consumer-information/> .

## **Rights and Responsibilities of the Student:**

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1. The student has the responsibility to make decisions that will help achieve their goal.
2. The student has a right to have all rules and regulations explained, including periodic updates of any changes.
3. The student has the responsibility to submit a detailed health physical form for all clinical placements. Students must provide documentation of all required titers and immunizations,



including a current year's FLU vaccine, prior to clinical assignment. Additional immunization may be necessary when required by clinical affiliates. Each clinic has specific requirements. NOTE: A background check and/or drug screening may also be required. **The costs of these tests are the responsibility of the student.**

4. The student has the responsibility to maintain high standards of health practice as they will be involved in direct patient contact.
5. The students must abide by all rules of CCSNH and the clinical affiliates.
6. The student has the responsibility to inform program faculty of any condition, including illness or injury, which may require special accommodations to fulfill student responsibilities. River Valley Community College will not be responsible for the lack of special accommodations if this information is not disclosed.
7. The student has a right to file a grievance if they believe there is any concern or situation in any aspect of the program that is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy and rights of the student. The grievance policy is explained in the Radiologic Technology Student Handbook and the CCSNH grievance policy is located on the CCSNH website and the College handbook.
8. The student has the responsibility to meet professional, ethical and moral standards. River Valley Community College and any affiliated clinical sites have the right to remove any student immediately for any violation of unethical or unprofessional behavior. This behavior may result in dismissal from the program.

### **Academic Advising:**

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Once accepted into the RVCC Massage Therapy Program, you will be assigned an academic advisor. Academic Advisors help you map out courses, review the plan, add or drop courses, and refer you to college resources. It is recommended that you meet with your Advisor at least once a semester. It is your responsibility to reach out to your Advisor and schedule meetings. Our goal is to meet each student's needs through individualized attention to self and academic progression.

## Student Supportive Services:

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RVCC offers a variety of student services that may be beneficial and help you succeed as a student.

- **The Advising, Career, and Transfer Center (ACT):** The Act is a resource if you would like to meet with an advisor and discuss career and transfer options. Visit the webpage here, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/advising-career-and-transfer-center-act/>
- **Tutoring Services:** Free Tutoring is available based on tutor availability. Please visit the website to apply for a tutor, drop-in session, or attend a workshop. <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/tutoring/>
- **The Puksta Library:** The library can help you find articles, take out books, computers, learn more about citations and much more. Visit this website to learn more <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/puksta-library/>
- **Quiet Space:** All three locations have a quiet space for anyone. Those with children can use the space as a parent's room. This is available at Keene State College at our Keene location and Lebanon and Claremont have rooms on site. For more information visit this site, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/on-campus-resources/parents-room/?highlight=Modern%20Parents%E2%80%99%20Room>
- **Food Pantries:** These are located at all three locations and sponsored by Student Government Association and in partnership from NH Food Bank.
- **Mental Health Services:** RVCC students have access to mental health services and resource through Kepro. Visit this link for contact information. <https://www.rivervalley.edu/kepro2/>

## Accessibility Services:

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Students that have a documented disability should reach out to the Accessibility Coordinator in order to develop a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). The LOA will provide reasonable accommodations or modifications based on your diagnosis.

To meet with the accessibility coordinator or complete the application, please follow this link on the RVCC website. <https://www.rivervalley.edu/student-support/on-campus-resources/accessibility-disability-services/>

### **Pregnant and Parenting Accommodations:**

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The Massage Therapy program follows the RVCC policy related to pregnancy and parenting for the didactic courses. <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/pregnancy-and-parenting-accommodations>  
Please see practicum work-based learning and clinic policies regarding pregnant and parenting accommodations.

### **Attendance Policy:**

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Students are expected to attend all scheduled didactic classes and practicum assignments during the semester. The attendance policies for didactic courses are determined by the instructor. The policy will be published in the course syllabus and will be discussed on the first day of class of each semester.

Practicum attendance policy is uniform within the program and is published in each clinical logbook and in the practicum/clinic portion of this manual.

Students should be aware that program courses cannot be made up and when a student is absent, the learning experience is lost. Absences may seriously affect the student's final grade. Students may apply for an extended leave from the program due to a hardship or illness. These cases will be discussed and decided on an individual basis with the Program Director. The Massage Therapy program follows the course attendance policies which are outlined here, <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/attendance-policy> .

**Classes:** Missing three classes of a full semester course will result in a failing grade. If students miss a single class in a partial semester class, it may be difficult or impossible to make up all the competencies and the students would then be at risk for not passing.

Students arriving late for class or leaving early will receive a minimum 30% reduction in grade for that day. Additional points may be deducted for missing significant classroom time, as deemed by the instructor.

Extenuating medical circumstances with a doctor's note will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for incompletes and consideration for days absent.

Students must notify the instructor before the class meeting by e-mail or telephone to be able to make up a test or quiz. Papers due must be e-mailed BEFORE the end of the class. It is the student's responsibility to check with the instructor for assignments and handouts missed on the day of absence and to get class notes from a class member.

***Please remember that notifying an instructor does not mean that it is an excused absence. Students are responsible for completing all missed work and being prepared for the next class meeting.***

### **Late Work Policy:**

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All work is expected to be turned in on time. If a student is not able to turn in work due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to communicate a request for an extension with the faculty. All requests are up to the discretion of the faculty as completing course content in a timely manner allows students to progress successfully through the program. If a student requests a leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances, please reach out to your academic advisor and refer to the student handbook for more guidance.

<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/medical-leave-policy>

### **Grading Policies:**

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**Performance Evaluation:** A variety of methods of evaluation will be used to demonstrate successful learning. Evaluation will include class attendance, homework assignments, quizzes, assessments, case histories, and practical examinations. **Passing = B- in all Massage Therapy Program courses.**

The following ten-point grading scale is used:

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82 *\*this is passing*

C+ = 77-79 *\*course needs to be retaken*

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

### **Equipment and Supply Requirements Policy:**

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- Massage lotion/oil/cream- Biotone Advanced Therapy massage lotion or other water-dispersible oil designed to wash readily out of sheets. Unscented is preferred.
- Massage table package is required within 4 weeks of the start of Basic Massage Therapy Theory and Application. The college bookstore provides a choice of massage table/chair packages to choose from. Please see instructor for more information.
- Various oils may be required for specialized courses. Instructors will inform students at the beginning of each class if these products are needed:
  - Hand towel(s)
  - Twin sheets
  - Wash cloths
  - Baby wipes
  - Slippers/Footwear (wear from changing area to massage lab)
  - Bag to carry supplies
  - Massage uniform- RVCC Massage Therapy shirt and loose fitting non-denim pants. (see Dress Code section)
  - Other materials may be required. Individual instructors will inform students during the first meeting of each class.

## Academic Honesty Policy:

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Original thinking and intellectual honesty are central to a college education. Research projects require the ongoing use of existing works, but students must conduct themselves with proper regard for the rights of others and of the college, in a context of mutual respect, integrity and reason. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not acceptable and will not be condoned by the college. Students involved in such activities are subject to serious disciplinary action.

The following are presented as examples of academic dishonesty:

1. Misrepresenting academic work done by someone else as one's own efforts, with or without permission of the person.
2. Providing or using prohibited assistance in assignments and examinations.
3. Unauthorized communication in any manner with other students during an examination; copying, giving aid or failing to follow the faculty member's instructions.
4. Tampering with or falsifying official college records.
5. Infringing upon the right of other students to fair and equal access to college library materials and comparable academic resources.
6. Falsification of data collected for and presented as part of course requirements.
7. Presenting as one's own ideas, another person's work or words without proper acknowledgement.

There may be other instances of academic dishonesty, which will be identified by a faculty member.

## Dismissal:

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The RVCC Massage Department reserves the right to dismiss any student prior to program/course completion for any of the following:

- Failure to maintain a C (80%) or better in required coursework in MASS courses.
- Missing excessive amounts of program/course materials (all missed work must be made up at the availability of course faculty).
- Unprofessional conduct or behavior, disrespect, slanderous behavior, bullying.
- Non-fulfillment of financial agreements.
- Classroom/Laboratory/Internship Conduct (Refer to RVCC's Student Handbook for extensive information).
- Smoking on school premises is not allowed.
- Failure to adhere to the dress code/RVCC uniform previously described during class, laboratory, and school-sponsored events.
- Failure to maintain acceptable standards of cleanliness, hygiene and grooming.
- Eating food in non-designated areas; no food is allowed during laboratory or clinical sessions.
- Failure to stay in the classroom and/or laboratory during all formal sessions until the session is completed.
- Failure to comply with all college and Massage Department academic and clinical policies as set forth in this handbook as well as all current college publications.
- Any actions that put client privacy and confidentiality in jeopardy.
- Due to the sensitive nature of massage practice, failure to maintain the highest level of professionalism and respect for each other.
- Failure to maintain appropriate draping when providing massage. To promote the therapeutic environment and relaxation components of massage, students must be respectful of others' boundaries and comfort levels.
- Disclosure of client or student confidential information is grounds for dismissal from the program.
- Behavior deemed disruptive and/or disrespectful when interacting with staff, faculty and other students.

## Communication Policy:

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Each massage therapy student has a college email account and a Canvas site called “The Massage Connection”. All instructors will communicate with you via your college email and/or blackboard site. *It is essential that you check these accounts regularly. It is recommended that you check your email daily. Use of your personal email address is not permitted for college communication.*

## Electronics Policy:

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All electronic devices are to be turned off during class time. Sufficient breaks from class will be given to check messages. Please notify your families and others who may need to contact you that IN CASE OF EMERGENCY they may call the River Valley 603-542-7744 number and the receptionist will get the message to you. Once the class has begun, any electronic devices which are on during class time may be removed by the Instructor or the student may be dismissed from class for the day. Each individual student is responsible for securing his/her valuables while at the college.

## Alcohol, Drug, and Use of Controlled Substances:

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**Substance Abuse in Classroom and Laboratory setting:** The program follows the RVCC Drug Free Workplace policy outlined in the Student Handbook, <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/drug-free-workplace-drug-free-schools-and-communities> If impaired behaviors are observed in the classroom setting, the procedures of the college policy related to student conduct are followed.

**Substance Abuse During Clinical Education:** In the event a student is intoxicated or under the influence of illegal substances during the clinical experience, policies are in place outlining the responsibilities of the college and the clinical facility.

**Prescription Medications:** In instances where a student may have a legal prescription for drugs that will show up on a drug test (pain medication or certain seizure medications), it is important to discuss this with the Massage Therapy Program Director as early as possible to ensure that correct process is followed prior to practicum placements. This may require students to provide proof of medication needs from their physicians and proof of a prescription *prior* to drug testing.



**Medical/Recreational Use of Marijuana:** While many states may have passed laws regarding medical or recreational use of marijuana, it continues to be illegal to possess or use on a federal level. Therefore, employers can set their own policies on this issue. Employers have asked if they are required to accommodate marijuana use as a reasonable accommodation under disability law. Courts and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have consistently held that employers are not required to permit medical marijuana use as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. That was the same position courts had taken under state law even in states where marijuana use was legal. So, even if the student has a medical marijuana prescription, the practicum site can still prohibit the student from attending a practicum experience at that site.

**CBD:** While CBD is not the same as marijuana, some CBD products do have small amounts of THC (the psychoactive component of marijuana) and CBD can legally be sold even with these small amounts of THC in them. Even these small amounts of TCH may cause a student to test positive on a drug test. Students need to be aware that drug tests can not differentiate between TCH in their system as a result of CBD cross-contamination or as a result of marijuana use.

**Drug Testing:** Students must be aware that practicum sites may drug test employees (and will require some of students at the practicum site, though they are not employees). Students who have a positive drug test will be denied a practicum rotation until the next time that specific Practicum course is offered, provided they can pass a drug test at that time. They may also be referred to the Judicial Committee of the college.

**Additional Information Related to Substance Abuse:**

Massage Therapy students shall be aware of the following.

1. The college's Drug Free Workplace and Drug Free Schools and Communities statement (see college Student Handbook).
2. The legal use of medications or drugs prescribed by a licensed practitioner is permitted provided that such use does not adversely affect the student's performance or endanger the health and/or safety of others.
3. The school will maintain the confidentiality of all records and information related to the student's suspected abuse.
4. The Massage Therapy faculty will assist students desiring to address a substance abuse problem.
5. A student who refuses to comply with substance abuse policy/procedure will be subject to dismissal from the PTA Program.

## **Safety:**

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Campus safety is an important component of your overall experience at RVCC. Please note the following elements of the classroom and emergency exit procedures. Students should register for **RVCC Alerts**, the college's emergency notification service. Visit the college website to sign up <https://www.rivervalley.edu/current-students/campus-alerts/> .

Classrooms will have a phone to use in the event of an emergency and a map of the academic center which shows the nearest exits. Students are encouraged to report incidents by completing the RVCC incident tracking report. Students can do so by visiting this link on the RVCC website, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/about/campus-safety/> .

Students can view the campus safety report by visiting the website, <https://www.rivervalley.edu/about/campus-safety/> . The report will show crime statistics at RVCC along with other safety and security information.

The faculty of the Massage Therapy Certificate Program are dedicated to providing a healthy academic environment. Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in scholarly debate with their instructors and fellow students. The students are also encouraged to work together in order to build teamwork skills essential for the workplace. Communication between students and faculty can help avoid conflict and misunderstanding. Additional Safety and health information can be found in the student handbook. <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/safety-and-fire-regulations>

## Office Hours

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Office Hours will be for each faculty member, are by appointment, and can be held virtually, via telephone, zoom, or face to face. Please contact each faculty member via email to make an appointment.

## Massage Therapy Lab

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The Massage Therapy Lab is open for your study, meetings, and practice when classes or meetings are not scheduled by appointment only. Contact the program director to schedule. Please leave it clean and neat as you would any professional clinic space. Do not enter the lab if class is in session unless permission is granted by the faculty.

## Technology Requirements

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Computer work will be required in almost all courses in the Massage Therapy program and are a requirement for any Online or Synchronous Online classes. Access to reliable internet is also required. Computer labs are available for student use in Claremont, Lebanon, and Keene. RVCC and the Massage Therapy faculty regularly require the use of Canvas for accessing course work, Respondus for proctoring of exams, Zoom for participation in online/hybrid courses and Microsoft Office for completing assignments.

Microsoft Office 365 is provided free for students and information on how to download the suite is provided during the college orientation.

Chromebooks and laptops may be taken out on loan from the Puksta Library. Please be aware that Respondus testing software may not be compatible on all Chromebooks.

Please review the following requirements recommended before purchasing a computer for use in the program: <https://www.ccsnh.edu/browser-and-operating-system-requirements/>

## Standards for Massage Therapy Students:

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### Expected Basic Academic Abilities:

- Read English at a basic 12th grade level as defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Write English to a basic 9th grade level as defined by the NAEP.
- Complete math computations to a basic 7th grade level as defined by the NAEP.
- Use technology at a basic level for postsecondary students as defined by the (NETS). Descriptions of technology abilities are described in various resources at [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org).

### Goal setting:

- Determine his or her personal goals related to school, career, health, family and friends, and finances.
- Write long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals based on a goal-writing method (e.g., SMART).
- Identify and list in sequential order the tasks and actions required to achieve goals.
- Troubleshoot obstacles and challenges to goal achievement.
- Track progress in achieving goals.
- Evaluate success or failure and determine next steps.
- Modify goals as interests and understanding changes.

### Time Management:

- Write monthly, weekly, and daily schedules (e.g., use an appointment book or app).
- Use a syllabus and look ahead to schedule study sessions.
- Write detailed study plans (what the learner intends to study during a study session).
- Plan time to accomplish tasks and activities related to goals.
- Make weekly and daily to-do lists.
- Prioritize tasks to meet deadlines.

- Make effective use of downtime (walking, driving, or other “dead” time) for study.
- Recognize procrastination and use personal motivation methods to avoid it.

### **Study Abilities:**

- Use effective methods to identify and learn new words.
- Identify unknown words (highlight in reading assignments, ask for definitions during lectures, etc.).
- Keep vocabulary lists of new words with definitions.
- Use a glossary or dictionary to look up words.
- Ask for correct pronunciation of words and practice pronouncing new words aloud.
- Create flash cards or use picture cards to associate new words to pictures or to know words.
- Regularly attempt to integrate words into communications with teachers and peers.
- Take effective notes from reading assignments.
- Understand textbook features and how to use them (e.g., learning objectives, key words, chapter outlines, tables, charts, graphs, and figures, summaries, review questions, etc.).
- Regularly utilize an effective reading system (i.e., a systematic method for accomplishing reading assignments that usually includes a preview component, an active reading component, and a review component).
- Identify key words and concepts and capture them in written notes.
- Utilize an effective note format (use of note forms, graphic organizer, etc.).
- Take effective notes from lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and classroom activities.
- Listen actively.
- Share ideas.
- Ask questions and follow-up questions to clarify understanding. © 2013 Coalition of National Massage Therapy Organizations Page 26
- Use a consistent note-taking format (e.g., outline method, block form, use of note forms, use of graphic organizer, etc.).
- Complete homework on or before homework deadlines.

- Write down homework deadlines.
- Clarify expectations by reading directions carefully and asking follow-up questions to instructor.
- Schedule adequate time to complete homework assignments.
- Prepare for written quizzes, exams, and verbal practical examinations effectively.
- Use effective memorization strategies to move information into long-term memory.
- Schedule adequate time to learn material.
- Use effective test-taking strategies to achieve good evaluation scores:
- Demonstrate methods to reduce test anxiety.
- Approach test taking strategically (e.g., answer every question even with a best guess, underline key words, cross out wrong answers, etc.).
- Learn from graded tests (e.g., identify where test content is sourced, identify flaws in vocabulary, etc.).

**Critical and Creative Thinking Abilities, (based on the Tricia Armstrong Model):**

- Observe: The ability to use the senses analytically to gather information.
- Generate ideas: The ability to focus attention, enliven prior knowledge, and generate new thoughts.
- Ask questions: The ability to identify what information is useful and needed and elicit it from instructors or resource materials.
- Connect: The ability to see and make connections by linking objects, ideas, processes, and concepts.
- Make analogies: The ability to compare two dissimilar objects, ideas, or processes by focusing on qualities they have in common.
- Recognize patterns: The ability to identify arrangements of qualities, forms, styles, shapes, colors, and designs to explore the interrelationship of parts in a whole.
- Solve problems: The ability to identify and define problems, generate possible solutions, make decisions, select the best solution, and test new solutions to make adaptations or refinements.

- Transform: The ability to internalize information and present it in a different way.
- Synthesize: The ability to put parts together to form wholes.

### **Interpersonal and relating abilities:**

- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial relationships with others.
- Treat others with respect and listen to their points of view.
- Manage interpersonal conflicts effectively.
- Demonstrate appropriately assertive behavior.
- Seek help from others when needed.
- Help others.
- Share goals with others or with groups and work cooperatively with others, including people with different points of view.

### **Personal development abilities:**

- Assess, articulate, and acknowledge personal skills, abilities, and growth areas
- Use self-knowledge to make decisions.
- Articulate the rationale for personal behavior and explore the values and principles involved in personal decision making
- Seek and consider feedback from others.
- Reflect to gain insight and learn from past experiences.
- Act in congruence with professional values and beliefs.
- Function without the need for reassurance from others.
- Balance the needs of self with the needs of others.
- Accept personal accountability for choices, actions, and outcomes.

### **Personal health and self-care**

- Practice regular personal hygiene.
- Understand how choices related to food selection and exercise influence health.
- Commit to getting enough sleep.

- Identify responsible health behaviors and demonstrate strategies to improve or maintain personal health.
- Set personal health goals and track progress.
- Use self-determined methods to reduce stress.

### **Technical Standards:**

All students in the River Valley Community College (RVCC) Massage Therapy Program must be able to perform diverse, complex, and specific functions and skills. Technical and professional standards for massage therapy are essential duties which speak to a student's ability to participate and be successful in the Massage Therapy Program. These attributes include, but are not limited to personal and professional skills, physical agility, medical safety and other requirements that individuals must possess in order to be eligible for satisfactory completion of the program of study as well as for the desired field of massage therapy.

These attributes must be demonstrated with or without reasonable accommodation as described under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The qualifications established by the faculty include but are not limited to the following essential technical standards:

### **Motor Skills:**

- The ability to perform full range of motion of body joints, fine motor movements of the hands, and the ability to stoop and bend.
- The ability to elicit information from clients.
- The ability to execute movements required to provide massage therapy treatments to clients in a variety of setting.
- The ability to lift up to 40 pounds of weight on a daily basis.
- The ability to carry objects weighting up to 40 pounds on a daily basis.



### **Sensory/Observation/Communication**

1. The ability to observe a client accurately at a distance and close at hand. This requires functional use of the senses of vision and hearing.
2. The ability to perceive the signs of disease and infection as manifested through physical and verbal assessment.
3. The ability to observe and appreciate non-verbal communications.
4. The ability to use spoken and written English to communicate in a coherent manner with individuals of all professions and societal levels.
5. The ability to convey or exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history; identify problems presented; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during treatment and post-treatment.
6. The ability to process and communicate information on the client's status with accuracy in a timely manner to members of the health care team.

### **Professional Conduct/Behavioral**

1. The ability to utilize intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities of a massage therapist.
2. The ability to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals under all circumstances.
3. The ability to recognize that one's own values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect one's perceptions and relationships with others.
4. The ability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.
5. The ability to learn and abide by professional standards of practice.
6. The ability to engage in client interaction in all settings and be able to deliver massage therapy

to all clients, including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults.

7. The ability to maintain composure when subjected to high stress levels.

8. The ability to adapt effectively to changing environments, especially those with high tension levels.

9. The ability to respond in an emotionally controlled manner in learning situations and emergencies.

*(Adapted from the Entry Level Analysis Project)*

### **Emotional Health Considerations:**

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The college must ensure that clients, patients and medical information are not placed in jeopardy by students during learning experiences. Therefore, massage therapy students must demonstrate professional behavior and enough emotional stability to withstand the stresses, uncertainties, and changing circumstances that characterize client/patient medical information, privacy and safety responsibilities or be removed from placement. Furthermore, the student is required to have the emotional stability required to exercise sound judgment, accept direction and guidance from a supervisor or faculty member, and establish rapport and maintain sensitive interpersonal relationships with employers, clients/patients and their families as well as fellow students. Students that are unable to exhibit these traits will be asked to leave the program.

## **CPR and First Aid Certifications:**

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Students must possess current Adult CPR and First Aid certifications prior to applying for a New Hampshire Massage Therapy License. A copy of the certification must be submitted to the state with the license application. CPR is provided to River Valley Students Free of Charge via an online program and through skills testing in Claremont.

## **Absence due to Religious Observations:**

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RVCC and the Massage Therapy has developed a process to reasonably accommodate a student's request for absence due to religious observation. Please see the RVCC policy here,

<https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/absence-due-to-religious-observation>

## **Conduct:**

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As a massage therapy student, you are expected to exhibit a high level of professionalism.

Codes of Conduct for Massage Therapy Students:

1. Demonstrate commitment to provide the highest quality massage therapy/bodywork to those who seek their service.
2. Acknowledge the inherent worth and individuality of each person by not discriminating or behaving in any prejudicial manner with other students, clients and/or colleagues.
3. Demonstrate professional excellence through actions and words in all college and clinic settings.
4. Acknowledge the confidential nature of the professional relationship with clients and classmates and respect each client's right to privacy.
5. Project a professional image and uphold the highest standards of professionalism.
6. Accept responsibility to do no harm to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of self, clients, classmates, instructors and associates.

(Adapted from AMTA Code of Ethics)

## **Classroom Dress Code and Personal Care:**

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You should purchase dark, solid colored scrubs to wear to all classes with a lab component. Loose yoga pants (not form fitting) and leggings are acceptable. Comfortable clean shoes or sandals that cover the toes are also acceptable. Acceptable attire for the lectures is neat and casual, such as loose-fitting pants and a neat and clean short-sleeved shirt. Provocative or offensive clothing (as deemed so by RVCC Faculty/Staff) is not allowed.

### **Unacceptable Clothing and Practices:**

- Form fitting clothing.
- Spaghetti strap tops.
- Warm-up pants, sweats, torn denim, spandex, and gym shorts are not permitted.
- Caps or hats are not to be worn in the classroom, clinic or while on practicum.
- Flip flops or Bare feet.
- NO visible cleavage, breasts, bras, and bra straps when standing, sitting, squatting or leaning over.
- No visible midriff or skin showing between the shirt and the pants when standing, sitting, squatting or leaning over.
- No visible underwear.

Students must avoid wearing dangling jewelry, wristwatches, rings, bracelets, perfume and aftershave when providing massage. Long hair must be tied back. Due to the nature of Massage Therapy, students must be sure to have fresh-smelling breath. Deodorant is highly recommended.

### **Scents:**

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Colognes, perfumes and other strong scents are not allowed in the classroom due to the nature of the classroom set-up and scent sensitivities.

## **Nail Care:**

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Nails must be neat and trimmed to the tips of the fingers. Student are responsible for bringing a nail clipper and file to all classes. Fingernails must be trimmed short enough that they cannot be seen when viewed from the palm side of the hand. Cuticles must be neat, clean, and free from hangnails or jagged edges. Nail beds must be clean and free of dirt.

## **Infectious Disease Guidelines:**

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**Blood and Body Fluid Precautions:** The body substance precautions developed by the Centers for Disease Control will be followed in all clinical areas and campus laboratories. (Body substances include oral secretions, blood, urine and feces, wound or other drainage.) Blood and body substances should be considered infectious in all cases.

<http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/Basics.html>

*Hand washing is the most important precaution to be taken routinely. Wash often and thoroughly.*

**Care of Equipment/Specimens:** Soiled linens, laundry, and non-disposable articles that are contaminated with blood or body fluids should be handled according to the procedure established for blood and body fluid precautions within the institution. See Program Director for more information.

**Personal Health and Accident Insurance:** Should a student be involved in any accident that requires treatment, the financial responsibility belongs to the student. Health insurance is suggested for the protection of the individual student.

## **Work-Based Learning and Clinic Policies for Massage Therapy Practicum Experience:**

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During the practicum and clinic experience, the student adheres to the agreed upon on-site hours and school policies. The student is not paid for the internship. Massage Therapy students must complete a certain number of hours with the Instructor present before they are released to work on the public. The amount may be different for each student and is based on the comfort of the student and instructor regarding releasing the student to work on the public. Massage therapy students must arrange for their own clients and schedule their own appointments once

they are released from the classroom portion of the practicum. The following sections outline policies and important information for Massage Therapy students. Please refer to the practicum and clinic handbook for more information.

### **Criminal Background Check and Clinical Record for Licensure:**

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Some practicum sites require a background check, drug test, and health records which may include immunization records. The State of New Hampshire denies licensure if a student has been convicted of certain types of crimes. Refer to <https://www.oplc.nh.gov/massage-therapist-initial-license-checklist>.

### **Health Requirements:**

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RVCC Massage Therapy students may be required by a Practicum site to provide evidence of medical examination (including immunizations) and a background check. The cost shall be the responsibility of the student. Students must show evidence of health insurance prior to Practicum/Internship experience.

### **Accessibility Services and Pregnancy related to Practicum Experience:**

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Pregnancy during Massage Therapy practicum experience will be treated as any other medical condition that may limit a student's attendance or ability to perform assigned duties at the practicum site. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Director to develop a plan and work with the RVCC Accessibility Coordinator in order to make sure field work hours are completed. Students must complete practicum hours and perform the expected program and practicum duties as outlined in the program requirements and in the practicum and clinic handbook.

### **Practicum Dress Code:**

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Students are expected to wear professional attire for clinical experience, practicum and special events. The classroom dress code expectations also apply to the practicum dress code.

### **Personal Health and Accident Insurance:**

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Should a student be involved in any accident that requires treatment, the financial responsibility belongs to the student. Health insurance is suggested for the protection of the individual student.

### **Medical and Liability Insurance Policy:**

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Students participating in Practicum experiences off campus are required to have a Medical Insurance: <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/medical-insurance>

You need to make sure that you have been billed for the student liability insurance through the college for \$1,000,000/\$3,000,000 coverage. If you have any questions about this charge, please contact the business office. Additional liability insurance may be purchased from the American Massage Therapy Association (<http://www.amtamassage.org>) or the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals (<http://www.abmp.com>).

### **Work Based Learning and Clinic Massage Consent:**

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Practice Massages must only be performed on individuals aged 16 or over with parental consent, or 18 and over with individual consent.

\*For more information, please review the RVCC Student Handbook and Massage Therapy Practicum Handbook for further guidance. <https://catalog.rivervalley.edu/student-handbook-20222023>

## Massage Therapy Program Student Handbook

### Statement of Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (please print your full name) have read and understand the information provided in the RVCC Massage Therapy Student handbook.

I have consulted with the Massage Therapy Program Director to answer any questions regarding the contents of the handbook.

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Student Signature

Date

\*\*\*\*Print, sign and return to the Program Director on the first day of classes.



