

# Alliance for Massage Therapy Education

Survey on Educational Standards | November 2010

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The Alliance conducted the following survey on educational standards from November 1-15, 2010, which was open to participation from the massage education community. The survey was publicized through the Alliance's own website and social media pages, plus the websites of *Massage Magazine*, *Massage Today* and *MassageProfessionals.com*. as well as a national email newsletter that is distributed to massage teachers. There were 312 online surveys completed using Google Spreadsheets, with respondents from three primary categories:

- School directors, owners, administrators and admin staff
- Teachers in massage schools/programs
- Continuing education providers

## Here are the survey results:

1. *There is a need for national education standards for massage teachers, which would define the core competencies required for classroom instruction and supporting tasks (such as curriculum and lesson plan development).*

46.4%	145	Strongly Agree
34.0%	106	Agree
11.5%	36	Neutral
5.2%	16	Disagree
1.6%	5	Strongly Disagree
0.3%	1	Does Not Apply
1.0%	3	no response

2. *How much formal teacher training does your educational institution (school or CE business) require for the hiring of a lead instructor?*

31.1%	97	100 hours or more
5.5%	17	50-99 hours
9.3%	29	25-49 hours
14.7%	46	5-24 hours
36.2%	113	Less than 5 hours
3.2%	10	no response

3. *How much formal teacher training does your institution require for the hiring of a teaching assistant?*

19.2%	60	100 hours or more
4.2%	13	50-99 hours
8.0%	25	25-49 hours
11.5%	36	5-24 hours
47.1%	147	Less than 5 hours
9.9%	31	no response

4. *How many hours of continuing education specific to the competencies of teaching does your institution require each year for its instructors?*

37.8%	118	0 hours
13.4%	42	1-5 hours
14.1%	44	6-10 hours
14.4%	45	11-15 hours
3.2%	10	16-20 hours
10.9%	34	21+ hours
6.1%	19	no response

5. *My institution provides adequate preparation for new instructors (e.g., orientation, curriculum guidelines, policies, procedures, classroom training).*

25.3%	79	Strongly Agree
27.9%	87	Agree
12.8%	40	Neutral
16.7%	52	Disagree
8.3%	26	Strongly Disagree
5.4%	17	Does Not Apply
3.5%	11	no response

6. *National standards need to be defined for entry-level massage/bodywork curricula.*

46.1%	144	Strongly Agree
35.9%	112	Agree
9.3%	29	Neutral
4.5%	14	Disagree
2.6%	8	Strongly Disagree
1.0%	3	Does Not Apply
0.6%	2	no response

7. *National standards need to be defined for advanced-level massage/bodywork programs and certification in specialized areas of practice.*

37.8%	118	Strongly Agree
37.5%	117	Agree
12.2%	38	Neutral
6.7%	21	Disagree
4.5%	14	Strongly Disagree
1.3%	4	no response

8. *There should be one centralized national program for the approval of continuing education providers and courses that can be referenced by state regulatory boards (versus individual state approval protocols).*

28.8%	90	Strongly Agree
24.7%	77	Agree
17.9%	56	Neutral
12.8%	40	Disagree
12.8%	40	Strongly Disagree
0.6%	2	Does Not Apply
2.2%	7	no response

9. *The Massage Therapy Body of Knowledge (MTBOK) accurately and appropriately describes the knowledge, skills and abilities required for entry-level practitioners of massage therapy.*

6.4%	20	Strongly Agree
31.7%	99	Agree
33.3%	104	Neutral
11.5%	36	Disagree
6.1%	19	Strongly Disagree
7.7%	24	Does Not Apply
3.2%	10	no response

10. *The scope of practice described in the MTBOK matches up well with the scope of practice definition in the laws and/or rules for my state/jurisdiction.*

5.8%	18	Strongly Agree
32.7%	102	Agree
31.1%	97	Neutral
11.5%	36	Disagree
6.1%	19	Strongly Disagree
8.3%	26	Does Not Apply
4.4%	14	no response

11. *The MTBOK needs modification before being adopted as an "official" document to be referenced by accrediting agencies, state education licensing authorities, and state massage boards.*

24.0%	75	Strongly Agree
29.2%	91	Agree
33.0%	103	Neutral
4.2%	13	Disagree
1.0%	3	Strongly Disagree
5.8%	18	Does Not Apply
2.9%	9	no response

12. *My school is interested in using the MTBOK as a guideline for curriculum development (whether new curriculum or revision of existing curriculum)*

7.1%	22	Strongly Agree
18.6%	58	Agree
33.7%	105	Neutral
7.4%	23	Disagree
7.4%	23	Strongly Disagree
22.4%	70	Does Not Apply
3.5%	11	no response

**Breakdown of Respondents:**

30.8%	96	School owner, director, administrator, admin staff member
44.9%	140	Teacher in a massage therapy school/program
15.1%	47	Continuing education provider
1.9%	6	Combination of two or more of the above categories
4.2%	13	Other [massage therapist(6); student(2); spa manager(1); association president(1); education publisher(1); textbook author(1); interested observer(1)]
1.9%	6	no response

### **Analysis:**

*There were clear trends that emerged with a number of the survey questions:*

- 82.0% agreed that national standards need to be established for massage/bodywork curricula in entry-level programs, versus 7.1% who disagreed.
- 80.4% agreed that competency-based national teacher education standards are needed, versus 6.8% who disagreed.
- 75.3% agreed that there needs to be national standards defined for advanced-level training programs and certification in specialized areas of practice, versus 11.2% who disagreed.
- 53.5% indicated their agreement with the need for a single centralized approval program for continuing education providers and courses, versus 25.6% who did not agree that such a program was needed.
- 53.2% agreed that their institution provides adequate preparation for new instructors, versus 25.0% who disagreed.

*The questions pertaining to existing teacher education in massage schools produced more mixed responses:*

- 31.1% stated their school required at least 100 hours of formal teacher training to hire a new lead instructor, versus 36.2% who indicated their school required less than 5 hours.
- While 37.8% stated that their school did not require instructors to receive continuing education each year specific to the core competencies of teaching, the other 56% of responses were widely distributed among the other choices – ranging from 1-5 hours/year to more than 21 hours/year.

*The four questions pertaining to the Massage Therapy Body of Knowledge also had mixed responses, with the highest level of Neutral responses (an average of 32.8%). This suggests that a significant percentage of respondents may not be familiar enough with the document to have formed an opinion.*

- 38.1% agreed that the MTBOK accurately describes the KSA's required for entry-level practice, versus 17.6% who disagreed.
- 38.5% agreed that the scope of practice definition in the MTBOK matched up with the scope as defined in their state laws, versus 14.4% who disagreed.
- A stronger response came on the question about whether the MTBOK needs modification before being adopted as an "official" document to be used by state agencies and national accrediting commissions: 53.2% agreed with that statement, versus only 5.2% who disagreed.
- Finally, just 25.7% answered that their school is interested in using the MTBOK as a guideline for curriculum development, versus 14.8% who disagreed.