



Accreditation Standards & Self-Study Report Instructions

START HERE: Directions to School Personnel:

The COMTA Self-Study Report (SSR) is to be completed and submitted in the **online Accreditation Management System (AMS), EDvera** (<https://comta.edvera.com>), available after the approval of the application form. *You will not be submitting this form; it is only provided as a working document.*

To assist in timely completion and to ensure all schools have back-up copies of their information, please **write SSR narratives in a Word document and save on school computers/network server first**. You may use this document to do so. These narratives can then be copied/pasted into EDvera for submission. All required exhibits (identified as “UPLOAD” below) should also be collected and saved in folders on school computers/servers prior to being uploaded into the EDvera system.

UPLOAD requirements:

- All exhibits must be saved in either **pdf, MSWord, or MSEXcel only** format. (PDF is most secure.)
 - No jpegs, PowerPoint, Publisher, nor other formats are allowable.
- All exhibits must be readable: scanned in **right-side up** and proper size and legible.
- **If an exhibit is NA, simply leave it blank.** (Do not upload a document explaining it is not applicable. This takes extra time for you and the reviewers.)
- Web links may only be used where requested. Screenshots saved as pdf are to be used.
- Exhibits should be clearly labeled with title and exhibit # before uploading.
- For the most part, only upload exhibits which are requested; do not attach additional documentation.

NARRATIVE requirements:

- Before answering the narrative questions, **read the new Standards carefully!** There have been significant changes, and all answers should be in relation to standard requirements.
- Keep answers **clear and concise**—write not to defend but to *explain* how you meet the Standard so it is understood by an outsider.
- Every question **must** have a narrative response--do not refer to exhibits in lieu of answering narrative questions.

NOTE: **Your SSR will be reverted for resubmission if the above requirements are not followed.**

Feel free to contact staff at info@comta.org or 202-888-6790 for questions.

REQUIRED BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Institutional Mission and Objectives

1. Institutional Mission

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: A mission statement outlines the purpose of an institution or program and provides clear direction for the ongoing development and operation of the institution or program. In developing and revising a mission statement, an institution or program should consider the needs of society, the profession, and the students for whom the program is intended. The institution's or program's success will be evaluated in relation to its mission. Therefore, the institution must have a mission statement that is published, well communicated, and implemented throughout the organization's programs and daily operations.

2. Institutional Goals or Objectives

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: In addition to a general mission statement, the institution has goals or objectives to measure its effectiveness. These goals or objectives are derived from the general mission statement and are stated in specific, measurable terms. They are then used to guide the development and evaluation of all educational programs and institutional services.

SSR Narratives & Exhibits:

Introduction: Provide the Commission with an overview of the institution/program(s) through the following:

1. Write an introductory paragraph providing the Commission with an overview of the institution and eligible program(s) and the goals for pursuing accreditation with COMTA.
2. State the published mission of the institution.
3. State the published goals or objectives of the institution.
4. UPLOAD college catalog and any applicable student/program handbook. (*NOTE: Links to online catalogs are not sufficient. The Commission must have archival evidence of the catalog policies at the time of decision-making; therefore a pdf or web screenshot is required.*)
5. UPLOAD completed COMTA Catalog Checklist (Institutional Accreditation Only)
6. UPLOAD faculty and/or employee manual(s)
7. UPLOAD syllabi for every course in the program(s) seeking accreditation, clearly labeled with title and/or course number
8. Enter names of faculty members
9. Enter names and position titles of staff members
10. UPLOAD: COMTA Instructional Personnel (Appendix D.7) and Administrative Personnel (Appendix D.8) forms for all applicable faculty and employees.

STANDARDS for BOTH PROGRAMMATIC and INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

I. Program Approvals

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Prior to accreditation, programs must receive state and/or any other applicable approvals to offer the certificate or degree. Standard I refers specifically to the approvals required for the massage/bodywork or esthetics programs. Any institutional approvals are considered in the Standard for Institutional Accreditation. Requirements vary based on the jurisdiction. In some states, programs must be approved by a state education agency and/or the specific professional licensing board. Institutions must demonstrate knowledge of and compliance with all applicable state regulations, as well as all applicable accreditation standards from COMTA or other institutional accrediting agencies.

- A. The programs under consideration for COMTA accreditation have current approval(s) as required by law and regulation in their jurisdictions, including state education agencies, state private postsecondary regulators, or massage or esthetics licensing boards.
- B. Individual programs are in compliance with all standards and policies of their institutional accrediting agency.
- C. Changes to accredited programs must be reported to COMTA in accordance with applicable policies.

SSR Narratives & Exhibits

1. Below is a list of locations included in the application for accreditation. If there are any others to include, click the "+ New Location" button to submit additional applications. [Automatically filled in from the application]
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of current program approvals from all applicable state or local agencies. [Automatically filled in from the application]
3. Identify the staff member(s) who completed the most recent COMTA online accreditation training.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit the certificate of completion for the COMTA online accreditation training.
5. For Programmatic Accreditation Only: Identify the institution's accrediting agency and submit evidence of current accreditation status and program compliance. [Automatically filled in from the application]

II. Curriculum and Instruction

A. Programmatic Educational Objectives

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Specific, measurable objectives for each certificate or degree program are derived from the institutional mission/goals. These programmatic educational objectives should be published and should guide the development of the curriculum, course content, course objectives, and evaluation methods. If there are multiple massage or esthetics certificates/degree programs, there should be separate educational objectives for each program that clearly delineate their different purposes.

1. Each program has clearly stated educational objectives that are published and consistent with the institution's mission.
2. Program objectives are stated in measurable terms so they may be used to evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes.
3. Program objectives are integrated consistently throughout the curriculum, instruction, and evaluation methods.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify all of the programs in massage/bodywork and/or esthetics seeking COMTA accreditation.
2. For each program listed above, identify the page(s) in the catalog and/or student handbook where the programmatic objectives are published.
3. Explain how the program objectives are aligned with the institutional mission. If there are multiple programs, briefly describe how the objectives differ between programs.

B. Curriculum Design

The curriculum is designed comprehensively, is organized systematically for effective learning, and prepares students for professional practice.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The curriculum is the plan for student learning and is where the institutional mission and programmatic objectives are realized. COMTA's curriculum standard includes three main components: organization, length, and content. The curriculum can be organized in a variety of ways, depending on the school's mission and educational philosophy. If an integrated curriculum model is used, schools should assure that course learning objectives are appropriately delineated and assessed between subjects. If a modular curriculum delivery method is used, specific steps should be taken to ensure that the needs of both beginning and more advanced students are met.

1. Programs are organized for optimal student learning, including the following considerations:
 - a. Programs are comprised of separate and discrete courses, which may be organized by content area, by term, or by a combination of content and term.
 - b. Each course has clearly identified learning objectives.
 - c. Programs are designed for systematic and sequential learning.
 - (i) All course prerequisites are clearly identified and enforced to ensure concept mastery prior to a student advancing.

2. The program length complies with the following:
 - a. The mission and objectives of the institution and program;
 - b. Professional licensing/credentialing requirements for the applicable jurisdictions and/or commonly accepted national standards in the field;
 - c. Equals or exceeds the number of hours required for state licensure or, in the absence of state licensure hour requirement, a minimum of 600 classroom and clinic/fieldwork hours that are directly supervised by qualified faculty members; and
 - d. Standard academic measures of course length as defined by the applicable regulatory agency (i.e., clock hour definitions, clock hour to academic credit conversions, term length).
 - (i) Schools seeking COMTA institutional accreditation use the COMTA Standard Academic Measurement Policy.
 - (ii) For programmatic accreditation, in the absence of other regulatory policies, the COMTA policy applies.

3. The program's curriculum content is coherent and demonstrates that it has been designed with the following in mind:
 - a. The mission and objectives of the institution and program, as well as the principles and values that are being emphasized by the program;
 - b. Professional licensing and/or credentialing requirements for the jurisdictions in which the school operates, jurisdictions for which the school prepares graduates, and/or national professional standards;
 - c. Historical foundations in the field;
 - d. Recent developments in the field;
 - e. Sound educational models and current learning theories; and
 - f. COMTA Competencies (see next standard).

4. Curriculum Competencies

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Curriculum competencies set standards of professional knowledge and abilities. Evaluating a program in terms of student competency places the emphasis on student learning, as opposed to how much time is devoted to each topic. As a specialized accrediting agency, COMTA has created a comprehensive list of content competencies that describe what graduates should know and be able to perform. Schools/programs must demonstrate how these competencies are being taught and assessed.

The Commission's six general competency areas are as follows:

- 1. Plan and organize an effective massage and bodywork session or esthetic treatment.*
- 2. Perform massage therapy and bodywork or esthetic treatments for therapeutic benefit.*
- 3. Develop and implement a self-care strategy.*
- 4. Develop successful and ethical therapeutic relationships with clients.*
- 5. Develop a strategy for a successful practice, business, or employment situation.*
- 6. Identify strategies for professional development.*

Programs should refer to Appendix D.2 for a complete list of the specific elements within each competency area.

a. **Massage/Bodywork Curriculum Competencies**

Programs meet the minimum competencies found in COMTA's Competency Chart (Appendix D.2), as demonstrated through teaching and student assessment.

b. **Esthetic Curriculum Competencies**

Programs meet the minimum competencies found in COMTA's Competency Chart (Appendix D.2a), as demonstrated through teaching and student assessment.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Briefly describe the licensing/certification requirements for graduates to practice legally in that state and/or local jurisdiction. Specifically include any details about required educational clock hours or curriculum topics.
2. Are there other jurisdictions for which the program prepares graduates outside the main jurisdiction? If so, describe the licensing requirements and how the program meets them.
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit copies of all professional licensure or credentialing requirements/laws for all applicable jurisdictions as described above.
4. Below is a list of the programs and the Program Content Form on file from the application. Please confirm that the form(s) is current and accurate. If any changes must be made, remove the submissions and submit revised Program Content Form for each program. [May have been submitted in New Program Application.]
5. Identify the page(s) in the catalog/handbook where the program course information is published.
6. Describe how the program's curriculum has been designed according to the requirements listed in Standard II.B.3 (i.e.; mission and objectives, licensing, historical foundations, recent developments, educational models and COMTA competencies). Provide specific examples.
7. Describe how students progress through the program(s) and in what order courses and/or modules are taken. How is the curriculum organization compliant with all requirements of Standard II.B.1 (i.e. separate and discrete courses, clear learning objectives, systematic and sequential learning, clear pre-requisites)?

8. Explain the methods used to ensure students moving from beginning level courses to more advanced material are proficient enough to progress (e.g. beginning level courses are pre-requisites to advanced material).
9. List the number of hours/credits in each program. Explain the reasoning for the amount of hours/credits of content in each program. Describe how the program length is compliant with all requirements of Standard II.B.2 (i.e. mission/objectives, licensing, directly supervised 600+ hours).
10. If credits are used, explain how they are calculated (per Standard II.B.2.d).
11. **UPLOAD:** If the clock hour to credit conversion calculation listed on the Program Content Form is different than COMTA's policy, submit a copy of the authorization for the calculation used (i.e. state or other accrediting agency requirements).
12. List the normal completion time of the program. If there is both a full-time and part-time option, include the length of both. What factors determine the schedule (i.e. length of time) for student completion?
13. **UPLOAD:** Submit any applicable planning/advising guides which assist students in course selection; and/or or a current schedule or calendar of classes. (This schedule will also be checked against catalog and syllabi to confirm total hours in the program.)
14. Below is a list of the programs and the Competency Chart on file from the application. Please confirm that the form(s) is current and accurate. If any changes must be made, remove the submissions and submit revised Competency Chart for each program. [May have been submitted in New Program Application.]

NOTE: Ensure that all submitted syllabi contain evidence to substantiate the teaching of each competency element through the topic outline and/or course objectives.

NOTE: Peer reviewers may request further documentation onsite (e.g. lesson plans) if not all competencies can be verified through syllabi alone.

15. **UPLOAD:** If there are additional documents (other than syllabi) used to demonstrate where competencies are taught, submit for verification.
16. Below is a list of programs and the Assessment Tools on file from the application. Please upload all remaining assessment pieces listed in the Competency Chart. [May have been submitted in New Program Application.]

C. Syllabi

Programs ensure documentation and consistent implementation of curriculum through the use of clear syllabi distributed to students at the beginning of each course. These syllabi comply with the COMTA Syllabi Checklist.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The syllabus is the documentation and implementation tool for the course curriculum. It also serves as a written contract between school and student, serves as an archival record of student learning, and clarifies expectations to increase student success. Syllabi should be developed for each course and distributed at the beginning of each course, and followed consistently throughout the course. This does not require that all instructors use identical syllabi, as long as consistency in learning outcomes is maintained.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe who develops the syllabi and how consistency between instructors is maintained.
2. When do students receive a copy of the syllabus?
3. Does every course syllabus contain all required elements per COMTA Syllabi Checklist? If not, explain how and when students receive this information.
4. Below is a list of the programs and the syllabi for every course on file from the application. Please confirm that the syllabi are current and accurate. If any changes must be made, remove the submissions and submit revised syllabi for each program. [May have been submitted in New Program Application.]

D. Methods of instruction and evaluation

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The written curriculum is realized by in-class instruction and evaluation. Quality instruction may be delivered in a variety of ways according to student need and instructor judgment. Instruction should encourage active participation by students and a direct focus on meeting diverse student needs. Sound adult learning theories should guide instructional choices and be evident in lesson plans and classroom observation. In addition, quality evaluation methods are essential for confidence in students' proficiency. Practical (hands-on) exams should be used routinely. These should be documented and employed consistently with predetermined rubrics or checklists.

1. Teaching methods are appropriate to course content, meet the needs of diverse learners, and are designed to encourage and enhance learner participation and involvement.
 - a. The teacher to student ratio reasonably ensures effective teaching and learning in both lecture and lab courses. This ratio is clearly published.
2. Evaluation methods (such as written and practical tests, papers, assignments, classroom observation, etc.) are used appropriately to assess student knowledge and skills.
 - a. Measurable performance standards are clearly outlined for students on syllabi.
 - b. Students are assessed using both written and practical (hands-on) assessments based on a predetermined set of skills (i.e., checklists or rubrics for practical exams) that reflect the key educational objectives of the course.
 - c. Faculty members use assessment methods and grading consistently in determining whether performance standards are met.
 - d. Students receive timely and regular feedback on their performance during the course.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe how the teaching methods are appropriate to course content, meet the needs of diverse learners, and are designed to encourage and enhance learner participation and involvement.
2. Identify the teacher to student ratio in lecture courses. (Enter maximum number of students per teacher.)
3. Identify the teacher to student ratio in lab/clinic courses. (Enter maximum number of students per teacher.)
4. Competency-based education relies on assessment of student knowledge and skills. Describe the evaluation methods used for different types of courses and how they are appropriate to the instruction.
5. When assessing hands-on skills (practical tests), how do instructors ensure consistency and objectivity (e.g. use of rubrics, checklists, special trainings/guidelines)?
6. **UPLOAD:** Provide a sample instrument for conducting hands-on/practical assessments.
7. Explain how students receive formal and informal feedback on their performance during a course.

E. Clinic/Fieldwork

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The clinic/fieldwork experience is a vital component of student learning. Clinic/fieldwork should be considered an integral part of the instructional process, with appropriate learning objectives and evaluation tools. Clinics may be either permanent health centers in which students operate or temporary clinics in classrooms, as long as the program can substantiate that the experience models professional procedures and involves members of the general public. Off-site, supervised fieldwork may also be included, but hands-on practice in other classes may not be considered part of the clinic hours.

Programs include clinic/fieldwork instruction as an integrated part of the curriculum according to the following requirements:

1. The clinic/fieldwork component is a distinct course with its own course learning objectives and evaluation methods (as evidenced by a written syllabus).
2. Students practice on members of the general public.
3. Clinics are designed to model professional procedures.
4. Students are supervised and evaluated by qualified faculty members.
5. Clinic/fieldwork hours are appropriate to the length of the program and adhere to the following:
 - a. Hours do not exceed 25 percent of the required hours of the program.
 - b. A minimum number of hours/client sessions on the general public must be performed and documented. (See COMTA Clinic Guidelines)
6. Clinics are operated in compliance with all applicable laws.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the clinic learning objectives, and describe the philosophy of the clinic experience.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the course syllabus and any other handbooks for the clinic/fieldwork component.
3. Identify the number of hours in clinic/fieldwork. Of these hours, how many hands-on client sessions are performed? What is done during the remaining hours, and how do these activities meet the clinic objectives?
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit an example of the documentation the program uses to record student completion of all hours/client sessions.
5. How is student performance supervised?
6. Identify which faculty members teach/supervise clinic.
7. Are there any other administrative/non-instructional staff involved in the clinic operations? If so, identify the staff members and the duties performed.
8. Describe how student performance is assessed and grades are determined.
9. **UPLOAD:** Submit copies of three (3) student assessments completed by faculty. *Redact student identifying information.*

10. Identify the laws (state or local) that apply to the clinic/fieldwork experience.
11. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of such laws. *Highlight relevant sections.*
12. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of any applicable licenses, permits, or facility approval for the clinic.
13. In addition to working in the clinic, please describe any other fieldwork requirements, including the hours completed. Are these supervised? By whom?
14. UPLOAD: If applicable, submit a copy of agreements with groups or organizations providing the setting for fieldwork experiences.

F. Externship (if applicable)

If clock hours or academic credit are awarded for an externship experience, it must meet the following standards:

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Externships involve experiential learning done away from the school. Schools may plan and coordinate these experiences to allow students to work with the general public while being supervised by a qualified professional who is not associated with the school. Externships are not a requirement for COMTA-accredited programs. However, if students are allowed to complete externships (as either a requirement or an elective), the experience must meet the COMTA definition of externship (see Definition of Terms) and the following standards.

1. The externship is a distinct course with its own course learning objectives and evaluation methods (as evidenced by a written syllabus).
2. Externship hours are appropriate to the length of the program and adhere to the following:
 - a. Hours are over and above the hours required for accreditation.
 - b. Hours do not exceed 20 percent of total program hours.
3. There is a written agreement signed by the program faculty and externship site personnel that clearly defines the obligations of the onsite supervisors, the faculty coordinator, and the student.
4. Student performance is supervised by an onsite supervisor who is legally qualified to do so.
5. Student performance is evaluated by a qualified faculty coordinator (employee of the school), and students are provided with planned opportunities to discuss the experience and their performance with the faculty coordinator.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Does the program include an externship experience (per COMTA definition) as either an elective or requirement? [yes, no] **NOTE: If no, skip this section.**
2. Describe the externship experience, including the number of hours, learning experiences, supervision, assessment of student performance and physical environment(s), as well as the relationship between the program faculty or staff and the externship site personnel.
3. Submit a copy of the course syllabus and any other student handbook for the externship experience.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of one (1) agreement between the program and an externship provider, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the onsite supervisor, the faculty coordinator and the student.
5. **UPLOAD:** Submit three (3) completed assessments of student performance, including the onsite supervisor evaluation and the faculty coordinator evaluation. *Redact identifying student information.*
6. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence that the student had contact with the faculty coordinator within the timeframe of the experience (e.g. lesson plans, attendance roster, syllabus outline, meeting notes).

G. Learning/Library Resources

Students have reasonable access to library and learning resources, including electronic resources, which support the program objectives.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: It is essential that postsecondary institutions have a library and/or learning resource center. The library should be more than just a physical location and should contain learning resources that are incorporated into the curriculum, support the research competency, and serve as reference materials for practical work in the clinic.

1. Learning resources are accessible to all students during and beyond classroom hours and may be provided via hard copy and/or virtually.
2. Learning resources are integrated into the curriculum and instruction, and students and faculty are trained on their use.
3. Students are guaranteed access to library and learning resources if the library is off site.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the library and learning resources available to students (i.e. type of library facility, which materials are available, what electronic sources are available).
2. Describe how library/learning resources are integrated into the curriculum. How are students and instructors trained to use learning resources for academic purposes?
3. If there is not a library on-site, describe how the institution or program ensures student access to library resources elsewhere.
4. **UPLOAD:** Provide an inventory of program-related materials held in the library, including books, periodicals, online databases or internet access, electronic media (videos, DVDs, CDs), computer software, charts, models.

III. Program Administration and Faculty

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The individuals involved in a program's execution are key to its success. Therefore, the program should be properly managed by a qualified individual with time and resources dedicated for administration beyond teaching obligations. Further, faculty members should have the educational background, field experience, and proper credentials to competently teach their assigned courses. In addition to expertise in professional technique, schools must ensure that instructors are qualified in teaching skills, and/or receive proper training and ongoing development in this area.

A. Program Administration

Programs are adequately managed by qualified individuals who maintain currency in the field.

1. There is at least one full-time employee of the institution designated as program director (or equivalent title) with responsibility for the supervision, management, and administration of the program.
 - a. If the program director is also a faculty member, non-instructional time is scheduled to effectively fulfill administrative and compliance duties.
2. Individuals with specific responsibilities for curriculum design, curriculum assessment, instructional supervision, and instructional evaluation have appropriate education or experience to perform their functions effectively.
3. The employee designated with primary responsibility for the program maintains current awareness of the field through professional development specific to the program.
4. Methods are in place to ensure the integrity of the program during changes in administrative staff.
5. For programmatic accreditation, there is a realistic program budget demonstrating adequate resources and institutional support of the program.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify who is responsible for administration of the program, including name(s) and title(s).
2. UPLOAD: Submit job description(s) for all persons responsible for administration of the program.
3. UPLOAD: Submit resume or CV of the administrator and/or education director demonstrating that the individuals with responsibility for curriculum and instructional supervision have the education and/or experience to do so.
4. For Onsite Review: Provide evidence of the program administrator's professional development specific to the field within the last year.
5. For Programmatic Accreditation Only: UPLOAD: To verify adequate resources and institutional support, submit a copy of the current program budget and/or additional documentation.

B. Faculty Qualifications

All instructors are academically and professionally qualified, based upon the following:

1. Instructors are qualified and/or trained in instructional methods and classroom management.
2. Instructors of theory and technique have a minimum of two (2) years of practical experience and are able to demonstrate the appropriate knowledge or expertise as required by the course learning objectives.
3. Instructors of anatomy physiology, and pathology have advanced proficiency in these sciences which is broader and more advanced than the material being taught. (See Faculty Qualifications, Development and Evaluation Guidelines.)
4. Instructors of theory and technique hold a current professional license, certification or other credential as required by applicable laws.
 - a. This requirement is waived for nonresidents of the jurisdiction if the credential is not available to nonresidents, or if the nonresident instructor provides no more than 20 hours of instruction over the length of the program.
 - b. If there are no professional licensing requirements, instructors of theory and technique must be eligible to sit for an appropriate licensing/certification exam or provide evidence of equivalent training or experience in lieu of eligibility.
5. Current evidence of instructor qualifications is maintained in faculty files.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Submit an Instructor Qualifications Chart with all current instructors which includes name, course(s) taught, educational background, years of practical experience in field, years of teaching experience, length of time with school, description of teaching training methods. (Please create either a MSWord Table or Excel Spreadsheet.)
2. Describe any jurisdictional teaching requirements and note which agency governs them (i.e. massage/esthetics licensing board, department of education).
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the jurisdiction's regulations regarding teaching requirements. *Highlight relevant sections.*
4. Describe the institution's/program's qualifications required of all instructors in relation to the requirements of Standard III.B. Include an explanation of educational qualifications, professional experience and teaching ability.
5. Describe the method used to ensure instructors are qualified (i.e. hiring guidelines, interview, checking references, teaching demonstration, teaching assistant/mentorship requirements).
6. For Onsite Review: Ensure that all faculty files have complete transcripts, diplomas, current credentials, job descriptions, ongoing professional development in both instructional and technical skills, and current faculty evaluation. **NOTE:** For programmatic accreditation, if this documentation is not kept by the institution, it should be maintained securely by the program administrator and available to reviewers.

C. Faculty Supervision

1. The institution or program uses standards of instructional performance and professionalism to guide hiring, periodic reviews of performance, and professional development of its faculty.
2. New instructors receive adequate orientation and training on job expectations.
3. Faculty members routinely participate in ongoing professional development in both technical knowledge and instructional skills.
 - a. Documentation of such training is maintained by the institution.
4. All instructors receive written evaluations on a regular and routine basis from their supervisor. These evaluations follow COMTA's Faculty Qualifications, Development and Evaluation Guidelines.
5. Methods are in place to ensure the quality of instruction through reasonable continuity of the faculty.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the faculty teaching standards the program uses to guide hiring, performance reviews and professional development. (For example, the Core Competencies for Massage Therapy Teachers from the Alliance for Massage Therapy Education (AFMTE), institution-wide performance objectives or rubric, or other industry teaching competencies.)
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit copies of job descriptions for all instructional positions.
3. Describe the orientation/training process for new instructors. Specifically, what training in instructional skills is given to new instructors who may have industry experience but limited teaching experience?
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit supporting policy documents and samples of orientation/training materials used.
5. Describe the policies & procedures used to ensure that instructors routinely participate in ongoing professional development in both technical knowledge and instructional skills.
6. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of the institution's or program's published professional development policy.
7. Describe the institution's or program's policy for instructor evaluation, including method and format of review, frequency of reviews, and how performance issues are addressed.
8. **UPLOAD:** Submit a blank copy of the instructor evaluation form and all tools used in reviews.
9. For Onsite Review: Ensure that faculty files are complete and contain current professional development evidence and current evaluations.

IV. Instructional Facilities and Professional Environment

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: A professional environment includes adequate and well-maintained facilities, equipment, and supplies. Teaching and modeling the standards of practice also create a professional and optimal learning environment. Programs should have in place clear codes of conduct for professional behavior, including appropriate boundaries and draping, as well as sexual harassment policies and professional liability insurance.

- A. Instructional facilities (classrooms and clinic/laboratory spaces) support professionalism, are adequate to meet the program objectives and student needs, and are in compliance with all applicable laws.
 - 1. There is adequate access to sanitation (e.g., restrooms, sinks, hand sanitizer) to support “standard precautions.” (See Definition of Terms.)

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the facilities used for classroom and clinic instruction, including the number of classrooms, layout, and clinic configuration.
2. Describe the student and faculty access to proper sanitation and hygiene (i.e. classroom sinks, hand sanitizer, proximity to restrooms).
3. Identify any facility regulations specific to the program and how the program’s facilities are in compliance.

- B. Programs use industry-current instructional equipment and materials that are adequate and maintained to meet the program objectives and student needs.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Briefly describe how the program selects and maintains instructional equipment to meet program objectives and student needs.
2. UPLOAD: Submit an inventory of classroom furniture, instructional equipment and supplies.

C. To support professionalism in the school environment:

1. There is a published student code of conduct that models professional industry standards (including hygiene and draping) and is implemented in classroom activities.
2. The institution or program has a published policy and procedure for preventing sexual harassment and handling complaints in the learning environment that is compliant with all applicable laws. The published policy includes a definition of “sexual harassment” and clear procedures for addressing complaints.
3. Adequate professional liability insurance is maintained for the institution, faculty, and all students.

SSR Narrative & Exhibits:

1. Identify where the codes of conduct and/or standards of practice are published for both students and faculty.
2. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of such policies (if not previously submitted in catalog/handbook).
3. Describe how students are directly taught such professional standards and how instructors model such behavior.
4. Identify the page(s) in the catalog where the sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct policy and procedure is published for students. (*NOTE: Employment policies regarding sexual harassment are within Standard XI.*)
5. UPLOAD: Submit a summary of student sexual harassment/misconduct complaints and their resolution for the past two years. (*NOTE: Employment policies regarding sexual harassment are within Standard XI.*)
6. Does the program possess a current professional liability insurance policy that covers all faculty and students?
 - a. [If yes]...UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the program’s professional liability insurance.
 - b. [If no]... Explain any exceptions. If the program does not provide an umbrella professional liability policy for students and/or faculty, provide evidence that the school has a process for verifying that all students have current coverage or they are not allowed to perform bodywork on peers or public. UPLOAD: Submit any other applicable documentation.

V. Program Admissions

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This standard refers only to those admissions processes and procedures that are specific to the massage/bodywork or esthetics program. Admission requirements, policies, and procedures may be set by the institution to be the same for all programs, or they may be program-specific. All such admission policies and procedures should comply with federal requirements, be consistent with the mission and program objectives, and ensure that only those students who can reasonably be expected to benefit are admitted. The criteria by which students are selected for admission should be consistently applied and documented in student files. Additional standards regarding advertising and recruiting are included in the Standards for Institutional Accreditation.

A. Admissions Policies and Procedures

Institutions or programs have published admissions requirements and procedures that are adhered to consistently.

1. Admissions policies and procedures are consistent with the institutional mission and program objectives.
2. The admissions requirements are designed to ensure that programs only admit those students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the instruction. The requirements include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Applicants must possess evidence of high school graduation or a recognized equivalency (See Definition of Terms).
 - b. If applicants do not possess evidence of high school graduation or the equivalent, they must demonstrate their ability to benefit from the training by passing an approved exam.
 - c. Applicants without high school graduation or equivalent must be beyond the compulsory age of attendance as defined by state law.
3. All admissions decisions are based on clearly published admissions criteria.
 - a. The institution or program maintains admission documentation in student files as evidence confirming an applicant's eligibility.
 - b. Institutions or programs maintain documentation of the reasons for the denial of admission to any applicant.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the page number(s) in catalog and/or student handbook where the admission requirements and procedures are published.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the institution/program's application form or any other admission document requirements.
3. Describe a normal admissions process to the institution or the program and how the institution or program determines whether applicants are properly qualified for admission. (For Programmatic Accreditation: only include information specific to program admission.)
4. Explain how the institution or program ensures that admission requirements and procedures are uniformly applied to all applicants. (For Programmatic Accreditation: only include information specific to program admission.)
5. Is there a process for admitting applicants who do not have high school graduation or the equivalent (i.e. Ability to Benefit testing)? If so, describe the processes and the documentation required.

6. Were any applicants denied admission within the past two years? If so, provide a brief description of the reason for denial(s). (For Programmatic Accreditation: only include information specific to program admission.)
7. For Onsite Review: Prepare documentation regarding denials of program admission in the past two years.
8. For Onsite Review: Ensure that all student files (electronic or paper) contain copies of all admission documents, including high school diploma or transcript, GED or equivalent , and any other evidence of readiness as required by program (e.g. test scores, letters of recommendation, pre-requisites).

B. Program Advertisement, Recruitment and Disclosures

1. Programs are accurately represented in all the institution's marketing and promotional materials, as well as in all verbal representations.
2. Disclosures
 - a. Costs

Total program costs are clearly disclosed for prospective students.

 - (i) Total program costs are available in program information even if the institution itself does not publish total cost.
 - b. Accreditation status

Institutions and programs accurately represent their accreditation status.

 - (i) No institution or program may use the term "accredited" unless it indicates by what agency or organization it is accredited.
 - (ii) Institutions having branch locations clearly identify the accreditation status of each of the branch locations.
 - (iii) Institutions or programs accredited by COMTA must name "COMTA" or "Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation" when referring to its accreditation. This language may be used with or without the COMTA logo.
 - (iv) The COMTA logo may only be used in the form provided by COMTA.
 - c. Licensing requirements

Institutions or programs must publish in the catalog or student handbook current licensing requirements, including:

 - (i) A brief description of regulations in the state of training, as well as contact information in the state of training, with a statement that requirements in other states may differ;
 - (ii) Reference to a reputable resource that lists the names, addresses, and licensing requirements for all the appropriate regulatory agencies in all states that regulate the practice of massage therapy and bodywork and/or esthetics/skin care (e.g., AMTA, ABMP, or similar resource that is updated regularly with information for ALL states);
 - (iii) The understanding that local municipal ordinances may apply in the absence of state law;
 - (iv) A written disclosure of any circumstance that would adversely impact an applicant's ability to gain a license and/or employment in the field after graduation (e.g., criminal record, failure to pass exams, failure to gain other credentialing requirements).
 - d. Salary and Employment Expectations
 - (i) If institutions or program provide information about salary or employment opportunities to prospective students, either in written or verbal form, such information must be accurate and identify the source and date.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. **UPLOAD:** Submit a sample of promotional materials, including advertisements, mailers, and brochures. (For Programmatic Accreditation: Only include materials specific to the massage/bodywork or esthetics program.)
2. Identify where the total program cost is clearly published for prospective students
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit copy of the published total program cost identified above (if not previously submitted in catalog/handbook).
4. [INSTITUTIONAL] List the URL website address for the school.
5. [PROGRAMMATIC] List the URL website address for the program information.
6. **UPLOAD:** Submit screenshots in PDF format of current website. At minimum, provide screenshots of the home page, program description(s), and disclosures of program fees.
7. Identify the page(s) in the catalog and/or handbook where the institution and/or program's accreditation status is published (if applicable).
8. Identify the page(s) in the catalog/handbook where information about professional licensing requirements are published (per Standard V.B.2.c).
9. Explain how prospective students are informed of massage/bodywork or esthetics licensing requirements and any potential barriers to licensure (per Standard V.B.2.c).
10. Does the school or program provide salary and employment expectations to prospective students in written or verbal form? If so, identify the source and date of the information provided.

VI. Student Experience and Support

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Open communication channels, responsive complaint procedures, and adequate support services are part of a student-centered culture. Institutions and/or programs should take measures to ensure student needs are addressed and student feedback is honored. These services may be provided at the institutional or programmatic level, but they should consider the specific needs of the massage/bodywork or esthetics student.

A. Student Communication and Feedback

The institution and/or program representatives are proactive in initiating and responding to communications with students, both formally and informally.

1. Effective mechanisms exist for consistent and systematic communication between students, administration, and faculty.
2. Student feedback/evaluation is solicited and responded to on a regular basis.
 - a. Institutions and/or programs use written anonymous student evaluations as part of gathering input (e.g. routine class evaluations, student feedback on programmatic effectiveness).
 - b. There is a system in place for the analysis of such evaluations.
 - c. Institutions and/or programs take appropriate action based on feedback as necessary.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the communication methods used between students and school personnel (both formally and informally).
2. When and how does the institution and/or program conduct student satisfaction evaluations? Describe the process of analyzing and responding to such feedback.
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the instrument(s) used to assess student satisfaction with instruction and the program.

B. Complaint Procedure

The institution and/or program provides a written complaint policy to all students upon admission that describes the procedure to be followed, an objective third party school official to whom the complaint should be addressed, a specific and reasonable time frame for response, and the contact information for all applicable regulatory agencies.

1. The institution or program maintains written records of all formal student complaints and their resolution.
2. COMTA-accredited institutions and programs include the COMTA complaint policy and procedures for situations when the school procedure has been exhausted without resolution.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the page(s) in the catalog or student handbook where the Complaint Policy is published.
2. How does the institution and/or program ensure that the complaint procedure provides due process for students?
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit a summary of formal complaints and their resolution for the past two years.

C. Placement Services

1. Graduate placement assistance consistent with the mission and objectives is provided as needed to ensure employment outcomes adequate to meet COMTA benchmarks. The extent and nature of placement services are clearly published for students.
2. The institution or program keeps verifiable records of each graduate's initial employment on file for five years. Any statement regarding the percentage of graduate employment (i.e., annual employment rates of graduates) must be based upon these verifiable records.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the type of placement services available to graduates. Include who is responsible for assisting graduates with placement and the format in which this occurs (e.g. job postings, resume and interview coaching, employer networking and job fairs).
2. Identify the page(s) in the catalog or student handbook where these services are described for students.
3. Describe the school's process for maintaining records of verifiable employment.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit an example of the verifiable employment records maintained by the school.

- D. For programmatic accreditation only: Students have access to all student services provided to other students within the institution, as well as to program-specific student services.
 - 1. The institution or program maintains academic advising and support that meets the specific needs of massage/bodywork or esthetics students, including program-specific advising, tutoring, and/or placement services (e.g. tutoring is provided in hands-on technique, not just general education courses; placement services are specific to the field).

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

- 1. For Programmatic Accreditation Only: Describe the student services available to all students and how these meet the specific needs of massage/bodywork or esthetics program students (e.g. tutoring, advising, placement).

VII. Student Performance and Transcripts

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Institutions and programs should monitor and maintain records of students' progress throughout the program. Students should be informed of expected performance standards and receive regular reports of their progress in the program. Further, due to the essential role transcripts play in industry licensing requirements, transcript authenticity is critical and should be protected. Additional standards regarding student records are included in the Standards for Institutional Accreditation.

A. Attendance, Grading Policies, and Procedures

1. Attendance policies comply with all applicable laws and/or accreditation regulations.
2. Faculty and staff consistently enforce institution or program attendance, academic performance, and grading policies.
3. Students regularly receive progress and/or attendance reports throughout the program.
4. Students are informed when attendance or academic performance standards are not being met

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the applicable state or federal laws regarding attendance with which the institution or program must comply.
2. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of all applicable laws. *Highlight relevant sections.*
3. Identify the page(s) in the catalog or handbook where the attendance policy is published.
4. Describe the process for monitoring and recording attendance.
5. Identify the page(s) in the catalog or handbook where the grading and completion policies are published.
6. How and when do students receive progress reports on their attendance and academic performance?
7. Describe how students are informed when attendance, grading or program completion standards are not being met.
8. Describe how the institution or program ensures that instructional personnel are consistent in their implementation of attendance and grading policies.
9. For Onsite Review: Provide samples of attendance and grading records by class and by student.

B. Transcript Verification and Authentication

Institutions and programs develop, publish, and consistently follow policies for student transcripts that conform to all applicable laws and regulations.

1. Transcripts are released only in response to student or graduate request.
2. Institutions use appropriate measures to ensure transcript authenticity (e.g., watermark paper, embossed seal).
3. All transcript information is accurate and verifiable via other student records.
4. Transcripts are maintained securely, backed up regularly, and kept on file by the school indefinitely.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Explain the institution's and/or program's policy for transcript release. Identify the page(s) of the catalog or student handbook where this is published.
2. Describe how the school ensures the authenticity of transcripts to protect against fraud.
3. Describe how the institution or program ensures that transcript information is accurate.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of an actual graduate transcript. Redact student identifying information.
5. **For Onsite Review:** Provide student records to verify transcripts through random student file audit.

VIII. Program Effectiveness

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Accrediting agencies are required to assess institutions and programs based on success in achieving their stated objectives and continual efforts to improve educational quality. Program objectives then serve as a guide and a measure for program effectiveness. Therefore, program administration should engage in ongoing self-assessment. Programs should collect and analyze feedback from a variety of sources, including students, graduates, employers and other interested parties. A Program Advisory Committee should be created to assist in formalizing this process. A Program Advisory Committee increases the perspective and broadens the input for review, so it is essential that it include members who are not directly affiliated with the school. The collection of feedback from all parties should then be analyzed and used in reviewing and/or revising all aspects of the program. The curriculum itself should be regularly reviewed and revised as needed to ensure that it is current and effective in meeting its stated objectives.

A. Evaluation of Programmatic Objectives

The program has methods in place to measure its success in meeting its educational objectives.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. *NOTE: Accrediting agencies are required to assess institutions and programs based on success in achieving their stated objectives and continual efforts to improve educational quality. Program objectives then serve as a guide and a measure for program effectiveness.*
2. Explain how the institution/program measures its success in meeting the programmatic objectives listed in Standard II.A.
3. For each program, discuss the program's most recent evaluation of whether it is meeting its objectives, including any plans for improvement or revision of objectives.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of the most recent programmatic objectives evaluation, including any revisions or plans for improvement.

B. Program Advisory Committee

To provide an objective analysis of effectiveness, the program maintains an active Program Advisory Committee that meets the following guidelines:

1. Includes diverse representation with a minimum of five members, at least 40 percent of whom are not directly affiliated with the institution.
 - a. Affiliated members may include staff, faculty, board members, students, graduates, and/or educators from other programs within the institution.
 - b. Unaffiliated members may include employers, respected practitioners, members of the public, regulators, and/or educators from other schools.
2. A minimum of one synchronous meeting is held per year, with additional interaction occurring regularly (e.g., emails, phone calls, meetings).
3. The institution or program must maintain detailed notes and evidence that the administration has considered the Program Advisory Committee comments.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Complete the Program Advisory Committee Member (PAC) template/chart (including name, title, contact number or email).
2. Describe the rationale for the current PAC member composition, how the school recruits members, and the frequency and format of meetings.
3. Describe an example of how PAC feedback was recently considered and incorporated for Program Effectiveness.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit minutes from the last two (2) PAC meetings.

C. Student Outcomes

To maintain and/or improve program effectiveness, institutions or programs monitor and report completion, placement, and licensure exam pass rates on an annual basis.

1. There is a process in place to ensure accuracy of the report which complies with COMTA Student Outcomes Tracking Policy.
2. Verifiable records of all completion and placement data for graduates are maintained by the institution.
3. Programs meet minimum benchmarks for completion and placement rates as established by the Commission, stipulated in the Student Outcomes Tracking Policy.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the process for monitoring completion rates. What records are used to determine completion rates?
2. Describe the process for collecting and monitoring placement data. Who is responsible? How often is it done? How successful is the data collection? How is accuracy of the data verified?
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the data collection tool(s) the school uses to monitor placement.
4. **UPLOAD:** Completion & Placement Chart for each program and track (part-time or full-time) using your SSR submission date to calculate the reporting period. See COMTA Website for chart and instructions for completion. Contact COMTA office for assistance.
5. **For Onsite Review:** Ensure the availability of documentation to verify all placement data.

D. Data Analysis

Programs have a process for collecting and analyzing data about the quality and effectiveness of educational programs and curriculum content. These data must include:

1. Student outcomes
2. Student evaluations and complaints
3. Graduate feedback
4. Employer feedback
5. Faculty feedback
6. Program Advisory Committee feedback
7. Industry trends, recent developments in the field and outside organizations (e.g., regulatory agencies and professional associations).

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the institution/program's most recent licensure exam pass rate. Indicate the exam provider and reporting period.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of licensure exam pass rates from the exam provider.
3. Provide a brief analysis of what the most recent completion, placement and exam pass rates indicate about the program's effectiveness.
4. When and how does the school/program collect student feedback?
5. **UPLOAD:** Submit five (5) examples of recent student feedback.
6. When and how does the school/program collect graduate feedback?
7. **UPLOAD:** Submit five (5) examples of recent graduate feedback.
8. When and how does the school/program collect employer feedback?
9. **UPLOAD:** Submit three (3) examples of recent employer feedback.
10. How does the school/program collect feedback from faculty?
11. **UPLOAD:** Submit examples of recent faculty feedback.
12. Taking all the previous feedback/data collection into consideration, please address the following questions on Program Effectiveness:
 - a. What are the strengths of the program(s)?
 - b. What are possible areas for continual improvement?

E. Program/Curriculum Review and Revision

1. Programs formally consider the results of assessment data collection and analysis in planning and implementing change in the educational programs.
2. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
3. This revision process is documented.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Provide examples of how feedback was used to improve program effectiveness within the past five years (i.e. addressing curriculum content, program structure or student outcomes).
2. UPLOAD: Submit documentation to support the examples provided above (e.g. notes, emails, meeting minutes).

IX. Degree Programs

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: In addition to complying with all other applicable standards, programs that offer degrees have additional responsibilities to ensure appropriate academic rigor and compliance with all applicable laws. The type of degree offered may be determined by the state, and institutional standards often govern the structure. Degrees are intended to develop practitioners for an academic path. Accordingly, the inclusion of general education courses supports a broader educational experience that should be reflected in the degree program objectives.

A. Standards Applicable to All Degree Programs

1. For academic purposes, degree programs are measured in credit hours according to the conversion outlined in the COMTA Standard Academic Measurement Policy.
2. Students admitted to degree programs have earned a high school diploma or recognized equivalency certificate before starting class, and proof of high school diploma or its equivalent is on file at the time of enrollment.
3. Transfer of credit may be applied toward the degree.
 - a. A minimum of 25 percent of the required curriculum must be completed at the school awarding the degree.
 - b. A maximum of 30 semester credits or the equivalent of the general education requirement may be provided by another degree-granting institution.
4. The institution may award appropriate credit to students in attendance at the time the institution becomes degree granting.
 - a. Former students must meet all equivalent course work and degree requirements and complete a minimum of 15 semester credits or the equivalent in the new degree program.
5. Faculty teaching in degree programs meet minimum requirements.
 - a. Instructors for technical courses have a minimum of three (3) years of practical work experience or equivalent training in the field being taught.
 - b. Instructors for general education courses shall hold, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree, with appropriate education in the specific courses being taught.
6. The institution maintains a library/resource center.
 - a. The library/resource center is supervised by a staff member who demonstrates competence to provide oversight and management.
 - b. The library/resource center includes holdings appropriate to the courses of study, standard works of reference, relevant current periodicals, and relevant reference materials in sufficient titles and numbers to adequately serve the students.
 - c. Study space appropriate for the number of students served is provided.
 - d. Appropriate assistance is available to the students from qualified staff personnel.

B. Occupational Associate Degree Standards

1. Occupational Associate degrees are a minimum of 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits.
2. A minimum of 45 semester credits or 67.5 quarter credits are included in the occupational area for which the degree is offered.

3. A minimum of six semester credits or nine quarter credits in applied/related education courses are also included.
 4. General education courses may be offered as desired, in which case the faculty requirements apply.
 5. The title of the degree program, the name of the degree, the credential issued, and all advertising, promotional materials and literature make clear that the degree is occupational.
- C. Academic Associate Degree Standards
1. Academic Associate degree programs are a minimum of two academic years.
 2. A minimum of 24 semester credits or 36 quarter credits are general education courses.
 3. A minimum of 30 semester credits or 45 quarter credits are in the technical field for which the degree is awarded.
 4. Full-time and adjunct faculty maintain teaching loads and schedules that allow time for student advising, adequate preparation, and continuing professional growth.
 5. A person with appropriate education or library work experience supervises the library.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Does the school have a degree program included in the application for COMTA accreditation?
[Toggle: Yes/No] **NOTE: If no, skip this section.**
2. The state requirements often dictate whether an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.), an Associate of Occupational Science (A.O.S.) or an Associate of Science (A.S.) is offered. Select the degree designation offered at the institution for massage/bodywork or esthetics: [Toggle: AAS/AOS/AS]
3. Briefly describe any state requirements that must be met for approval to offer a degree.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit any applicable state guidelines or approvals.
5. List the General Education courses which comprise the degree, including the hours/credits.
6. Programs that offer degrees have additional responsibilities to ensure appropriate academic rigor and compliance with all applicable laws. Briefly outline how the degree program meets a higher standard in these particular areas (per Standard IX.A-C).
 - a. Admissions:
 - b. Transfer Credit:
 - c. Faculty Qualifications:
 - d. Library/Resource Center:
7. **UPLOAD:** Submit any additional documentation related to degree program not submitted elsewhere.

X. Distance Education

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Distance education (both fully online and hybrid courses) utilizes technology to create enriching virtual classroom experiences. Distance education must meet the criteria of supporting regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor. (Independent study or correspondence courses do not meet that criterion.) The Commission acknowledges that there are some competencies within a massage/bodywork or esthetics program that may be taught through distance education. These competencies typically do not involve hands-on work or require instant oversight or feedback. Programs using distance education must demonstrate continued compliance with these and other applicable standards. (See COMTA's Distance Education Guidelines for additional information.)

A. Basic Approvals

1. Courses that utilize distance education are reviewed and approved by COMTA before being offered (not for initial applicants).
2. Hours awarded for distance education constitute no more than 49 percent of the program clock hours or credits (whichever is less). This includes any general education hours that may be included in a degree program.
3. Institutions and programs must be approved to offer distance education for both in-state and out-of-state students where applicable.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Does the school offer distance education courses (online or hybrid) as part of the massage or esthetics program(s)? [Toggle: Yes/No] **NOTE: If no, skip all of Standard X.A-E section.**
2. Describe the process the institution or program used to design and launch distance education courses.
3. Explain all state regulations and approvals necessary for offering distance education. This should include in-state regulations as well as any other state regulation that is applicable for the state in which the program is intended to prepare graduates for professional practice.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of state approval to offer distance education courses.

B. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Course content does not require on-site, hands-on, or immediate monitoring of student work.
 - a. If any COMTA Competencies are taught or assessed via distance education, methods appropriate to the language of the Competency are used.
2. Hours or credits awarded for distance education courses are comparable to those offered for similar amount of content in classroom courses.
3. Distance education courses are designed to provide regular, meaningful, effective, and timely interaction between students and faculty.
4. The program maintains control over the curriculum within the distance education courses and can make revisions as needed. The program must be able to adjust course delivery as needed to meet student needs.
5. Faculty teaching distance education courses are experienced and/or trained in distance education methods.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the use of distance education in the program, including which courses are offered through distance learning. Are the courses fully online or offered as hybrid courses with only part of the course online? Are the courses offered solely online or are students given a choice of formats? Explain the reasoning for using distance education.
2. Explain how the institution or program determines that the clock hours/credits for online or hybrid courses are comparable to face-to-face clock hours or credits.
3. Does the program use its own faculty or contract with a third-party for instruction? [TOGGLE: Faculty/Third-Party]
 - a. [IF Third-Party:] Describe how the program maintains control over the course content and can adjust delivery to meet student needs.
 - b. [If Third Party]: UPLOAD: Submit evidence of third party contracts.
 - c. [IF Faculty:] Describe how faculty members are trained in distance education methods.
 - d. [IF Faculty:] List the faculty teaching distance education courses and include their qualifications for doing so.
4. Describe the methods used to ensure regular, meaningful, effective, and timely contact between instructors and students, as well as between students and students.
5. UPLOAD: Provide evidence of two specific examples of such regular, meaningful, effective, and timely contact between instructors and students, as well as between students and students.
6. For Onsite Review: Provide reviewers log-in access to the courses from the instructor point of view.

C. Security and Assessment

1. Distance education course information for students and faculty is private and secure via log-in username and password.
2. Distance education courses are designed to provide effective assessment of student learning.
3. Programs and distance education course faculty employ methods to assure student identity and academic integrity in coursework, including assessments.
 - a. Such methods may include, as appropriate, a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, or other technologies and/or practices that are effective in verifying each student's identity.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the methods used to maintain student and faculty security in distance education courses.
2. Describe the methods used to assess student learning in each distance education course and whether these differ in face-to-face course offerings. If different, explain the rationale for the assessments used specifically for distance learning.
3. Describe how the program and faculty ensure student identity and academic integrity in completing coursework, including assessments and assignments. (This may include proctored assessments, secure log-ins, timed examination, anti-plagiarism submission tools, and other accepted practices.)
4. For Onsite Review: Provide access to course materials for confirmation.

D. Student Support (For Institutional Accreditation Only)

1. Admissions and marketing materials inform prospective students of courses only offered via the distance education format.
2. Students are oriented to the process of distance education teaching and learning, and/or are assessed to determine preparedness for success in distance learning environments.
3. Student support services are available for students while taking online courses.
4. Courses that utilize distance education formats must meet ADA standards.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits (Institutional Accreditation Only):

1. Explain how students are informed of distance education requirements and formats prior to program admission.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of all admissions and marketing information clearly disclosing distance education courses and requirements.
3. Describe how student orientation is conducted to ensure students have the knowledge and skills to succeed in a distance learning environment.
4. Are there any instances when students would be completing portions of the program without attending classes on campus? Toggle: Yes/No]
5. [If yes], describe how student advising, tutoring, career guidance, library resources and other student services are offered to students taking distance education courses.

E. Distance Education Infrastructure and Support (For Institutional Accreditation Only)

1. Distance education courses use a learning management system (LMS) or similar platform to facilitate interaction and accountability that is appropriate to the scale of the distance education program.
2. The institution has personnel capable of supporting the distance education hardware/software onsite infrastructure or interface with outside hosts
3. The institution ensures effective and timely support for hardware and software needs of faculty and students.
4. The institution ensures sufficient bandwidth to provide distance education courses.
5. Distance education course content and activity are backed up daily.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits (Institutional Accreditation Only):

1. Describe the platform or Learning Management System (LMS) that the institution or program uses for distance education courses. Is this the same for all courses?
2. Explain how technical support is provided for students and/or faculty.

STANDARDS for INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION ONLY

XI. Institutional Management and Administration

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Management's primary role is to oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of an effective institution and/or program. This includes upholding and promoting quality education, as well as maintaining government and accreditation compliance on an ongoing basis. An institution's management and administrative staff should be competent, with well-defined policies and procedures that promote consistency, communication, and regular review and planning.

A. Government Compliance

1. The institution is licensed as required by local, state, or federal law to offer educational services in all current locations.
2. The institution maintains compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and accreditation standards.
3. Any expansion in programs by institutions already COMTA-accredited must be approved by COMTA prior to their being offered to students, including but not limited to, additional certifications or degrees, new programs, substantive changes, or distance education formats.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify the local, state or federal governmental agencies that license or regulate the institution to operate legally. Provide the names, addresses and phone numbers of such. [Automatically filled in from the application]
2. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of current legal operation. [Automatically filled in from the application]
3. Identify any other types and agencies of accreditation held by the institution. [Automatically filled in from the application]
4. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of accreditation status with other accrediting agencies. [Automatically filled in from the application]
5. Are the owners affiliated with any other educational institutions? If so, please identify which institutions .
6. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of any applicable owner affiliations noted above
7. Describe any legal actions against the institution in the past five years and the outcome of those actions.
8. Describe any currently pending regulatory or legal actions. Identify the issues, parties and status in detail.

B. Management, Policies, and Procedures

1. Institutions have qualified and adequately staffed management in place.
2. The institution develops, publishes, and follows internal policies and procedures to ensure consistent operation.
3. Mechanisms exist for regular and effective communication between and among management and other staff.
4. Institutional management engages in regular review and planning.
 - a. The institution has a process for measuring success in meeting its mission and objectives.
 - b. Planning is in alignment with the mission and objectives of the institution.
 - c. A strategic plan includes both short-term and long-term goals that are linked to specific resources (e.g., timelines, finances, personnel, facilities).

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify the legal organization of the entity providing the program under review (e.g. sole proprietorship, corporation, non-profit, public). [Automatically filled in from the application]
2. Describe the ownership or control of the institution. If a corporation, a limited liability company, partnership or limited partnership, list the names, addresses and percentage of ownership of anyone owning more than 10% of the institution. [Automatically filled in from the application]
3. Provide a brief history of the institution, including past owners, different names under which the institution has operated, changes in organizational or corporate form and relevant dates for all of these items.
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit evidence of legal structure, including incorporation papers, bylaws, etc.
5. Describe how the school is managed, including campus-based and corporate oversight as applicable. List the members of the management team and their level of involvement.
6. **UPLOAD:** Submit a detailed organizational chart, including the position titles and full names of all staff.
7. Describe the communication channels available within the management team, between management and other employees, and between employees.
8. Describe how the institution measures its success in meeting its institutional mission and/or objectives. Indicate the measureable factors used to evaluate and document success of the organization as a whole.
9. Describe the strategic planning process which guides the institution, including who is involved in planning activities.
10. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the most recent strategic plan, including both short-term and long-term goals linked to specific resources (e.g. timelines, finances, personnel, facilities).
11. For Onsite Review: Provide evidence of communications between management, staff, and faculty (e.g. meeting agendas and minutes, emails, memos).

C. Human Resources

Management uses human resource strategies to ensure effective staff performance.

1. Management recruits and hires staff with appropriate training and experience.
2. Management and staff are fully aware of their job descriptions and are provided adequate orientation, supervision, ongoing training, and routine evaluation to ensure proficiency in their positions.
3. Management has in place reasonable measures to ensure the continuity of staff knowledge regarding school policies, regulation, and accreditation standards.

SSR Narrative & Exhibits:

1. Explain the human resources process for recruiting and hiring qualified non-instructional staff members. Include who has hiring and firing authority within the organization. (NOTE: This does not include faculty hiring, which has been addressed elsewhere in the Standards.)
2. Describe how new non-instructional staff members are oriented and trained for their positions.
3. Explain the policies for ongoing evaluation of non-instructional staff.
4. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the form that the institution uses to evaluate non-instructional personnel.
5. Describe the ongoing professional development opportunities provided to management and staff to support their particular roles.
6. UPLOAD: Submit job descriptions for all non-instructional positions. Documents should include reporting relationship, specific essential job functions and qualifications (training, experience, special skills).
7. For Onsite Review: Ensure that documentation of orientation, supervision, ongoing training and evaluation of all staff is complete in employee files.

D. Employment Policies

1. Non-discrimination
The institution practices are non-discriminatory with respect to race, gender, religion, nationality, age, disability, sexual orientation or other status protected by law.
2. Sexual harassment
The institution develops, publishes and strictly adheres to a sexual harassment policy that is in compliance with federal and state government requirements and includes a definition of sexual harassment.
3. Grievance Policy
Management develops, publishes, and adheres to a grievance procedure for all employees.
 - a. Records of staff and faculty grievances are maintained and are available for inspection by the accrediting agency.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify the page(s) in the employee handbook where the non-discrimination policy for employees is published.
2. Identify the page(s) in the employee handbook where the sexual harassment policy for employees is published.
3. Describe how the institution has determined that the non-discrimination and sexual harassment policies meet applicable laws and how it ensures employee compliance with the policies.
4. Identify the page(s) in the employee handbook where the formal grievance policy/procedure for employees is published.
5. Provide a general summary of employment-related grievances and their resolution for the past two years, including sexual harassment complaints, discrimination complaints, and/or general employment grievances that were addressed through the formal grievance procedure.

E. Institutional Facilities

Non-instructional facilities (administrative facilities and “common areas”) support the continuation of the school and programs, are adequate to meet the mission and objectives, and are in compliance with all applicable laws, building codes and health and safety regulations.

1. Non-instructional facilities (e.g., lobbies, offices, restrooms, lounges, and campus grounds) are safe, accessible, clean, well lit, suitably furnished, and adequate to meet the purpose of the area.
2. If the institution provides student housing, the facilities meet fire, safety, and sanitation standards as required by the applicable regulatory authorities.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Are the institutional facilities owned or leased [Toggle: Own/Lease]?
 - a. [If leased] When does the current lease expire?
 - b. [If owned] Are there any liens on the property? If so, explain.
2. Describe the general institutional facilities, including square footage, layout of rooms, where offices are located in relation to classrooms, etc.
3. Identify who is responsible for the maintenance of the facilities and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and building codes.
4. For Onsite Review: Provide a copy of the current lease or deed.
5. For Onsite Review: Provide current copies of all local code compliance documentation, including *current* building inspection, fire inspection and health inspection as required.

XII. Institutional Financial Practices

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Institutions should be financially sound, show adequate financial planning and management, and be in compliance with all regulatory agency requirements. Verification of financial stability requires annual independently reviewed or audited financial reports that follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). An independent Compilation with Disclosures will also be considered for schools generating less than \$400,000 in gross revenue. See COMTA Financial Reporting Guidelines for more information. In addition, fairness and consistency are required with regard to tuition and refund policies.

A. Financial Stability

Institutions are adequately financed, and finances are administered competently and legally to ensure long-term stability.

1. A responsible financial management system ensures the continuance of the institution.
 - a. Financial books and bank accounts are separate from any other finances not connected to the institution.
 - b. Written policies and procedures exist to assure the safety, accountability, and effective use of financial resources.
2. The institution demonstrates a commitment to the financial resources for the education of all currently enrolled students in a program consistent with the standards.
 - a. Financial reports provide clear evidence of financial stability and sound fiscal practices (e.g., budget, tuition bond, letter of credit, audited or reviewed statements, history of income and reserves, current ratio of assets and liabilities).
 - b. Financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally acceptable accounting principles, the COMTA Financial Reporting Guidelines, and all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.
3. Institutions carry adequate general liability insurance for all properties to address extraordinary events that could disrupt business operations (e.g., fire, water, theft, or tampering).

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify who is responsible for the financial management of the school. List all persons involved in recordkeeping, decision-making, or any monetary transactions.
2. Describe the financial management system. Include the method of record keeping for all transactions, the financial checks and balances, and the method for acknowledging and recording payment.
3. Discuss policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety, accountability and effective use of financial resources.
4. Identify how school record keeping is maintained separate from personal or other business accounts.
5. **UPLOAD:** Submit independently reviewed or audited financial reports (statement of financial affirmation and assets, liabilities, equities or equivalent) income statements, budget documents comparing budgeted items to actual amounts, detailed operating statements and other relevant data for the past two completed fiscal years. **NOTE:** If the institution's annual gross revenue is below \$400,000 and it is not participating in Title IV, the school may submit an independent compilation with disclosures. See COMTA Financial Reporting Guidelines for details.

6. UPLOAD: Current financial statements, year to date
7. UPLOAD: Tuition bond, tuition insurance or inclusion in a similar plan to ensure ability to complete instruction of current students (if applicable).
8. UPLOAD: Institution's current general liability insurance policy.
9. UPLOAD: Current budget documents, comparing budgeted items against actual amounts
10. UPLOAD: Other supporting documents to demonstrate financial stability
11. Discuss whether the income and reserves are sufficient to complete the instruction of currently enrolled students while still meeting COMTA standards and applicable legal requirements. Be specific. Specify use of tuition bonds, tuition insurance, or contribution to a public fund, and whether this is required by law or regulation.

B. Student Finance and Tuition Policies

Tuition policies are reasonable, clear and uniformly applied.

1. All program costs, including extra costs, are clearly published and fully disclosed to prospective students.
2. Tuition and fees are charged consistently for students admitted under similar circumstances e.g., employee discounts, early payments or registration, special cohorts).
3. The tuition and refund policies are published, easy to understand, applied equitably, and comply with the COMTA Cancellation and Refund Policy.
4. Written records are maintained for all student transactions, and there is a process for ensuring accuracy of records.
5. Institutions participating in state or federal student tuition assistance programs (non-Title IV) comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the sponsoring agency.
6. Institutions that offer scholarships publish the terms, including the basis for selection, deadline dates for applications, the number of scholarships to be awarded, and any other applicable terms and conditions.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify the jurisdictional (state) requirements for tuition and refunds.
2. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of jurisdictional requirements for tuition. *Highlight relevant sections.*
3. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the jurisdictional requirements for refund. *Highlight relevant sections.*
4. Identify the page(s) in the catalog where the program costs, tuition and refund policies are outlined.
5. Describe how the institution ensures that tuition and refund policies are applied equitably.
6. Explain any variations in program costs provided by the institution (e.g., tuition increases, employee discounts, early payments or registration, contracts with businesses).
7. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of clear and consistent publication of any variations in program costs noted above.
8. Identify the staff member(s) responsible for calculating and processing student refunds.
9. Does your school participate in any state or non-Title IV federal student tuition assistance programs (e.g., state tuition grants, Veterans Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc)? [Yes/No toggle]
10. [If yes] Identify the agenc(ies) and date of participation.
11. [If yes] UPLOAD: Submit evidence of current approval(s).
12. Describe any scholarships offered by the institution and the eligibility criteria. Include information about the terms and the notifications to students about the criteria.
13. UPLOAD: Submit evidence of published scholarship information, including copy of the flyers, postings and/or catalog information.
14. For Onsite Review: Prepare a list of students who withdrew in the past year with Last Date of Attendance (LDA), amount and date of refund. Be prepared for student file audit.

XIII. Advertising, Recruiting, and Enrollment Practices

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Institutions must use ethical recruitment and enrollment practices and ensure that all recruitment and enrollment practices comply with applicable regulations. “Recruiting practices” include all activities designed to attract students and lead to student enrollment. These include but are not limited to advertising, public outreach and promotion, correspondence with prospective students, and completing enrollment documents. “Recruiting personnel” refers to anyone whose primary responsibility is recruiting, contacting, or responding to prospective students. These staff positions may have different titles at different institutions, but all must comply with the following standards. All activities should provide prospective students with complete and accurate information about the institution so that students can make informed enrollment decisions.

A. Advertising

1. All advertising and promotional materials (including the institution’s website) are clear, factually accurate and current, and avoid leaving any false or unsupported impressions of the institution or program, including location name, educational programs, services, policies, and accreditation status.
2. All advertising and promotional materials (including the institution’s website) comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the COMTA Advertising and Recruiting Policy.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify any applicable laws or regulations that govern advertising for the institution.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of any local or state regulations. *Highlight relevant sections.*
3. Describe the types of promotional materials the institution uses, including but not limited to the website, purchased ads, mailings, and brochures or postcards.
4. Describe how the institution ensures that all advertising and promotion are ethical and accurate, including who is responsible for ensuring all activities are in compliance.
5. For Onsite Review: Provide copies of all advertising and promotional materials used within the past year (print ads, brochures, postcards, mailings, letters, promotional scripts, etc).

B. Recruiting Practices and Personnel

Institutions employ ethical and legal recruitment practices.

1. Institutions conform to all recruitment laws and regulations of the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate, including any applicable regulatory requirements for recruitment personnel.
2. Institutions have policies and procedures in place to ensure that ethical recruitment practices are followed and information provided to prospective students is accurate. These policies must also comply with the COMTA Advertising and Recruiting Policy.
3. An institution's recruitment efforts focus on attracting only students who are qualified and likely to complete and/or benefit from the education provided.
4. Institutions may not promise prospective students that program completion will guarantee employment, licensure, or certification.
5. Personnel are trained and qualified to engage in recruiting activities and may only use a title that accurately represents the individual's primary duties.
6. An institution does not provide a commission, bonus, or other financial incentive or payment to employees involved in the recruitment or admission of students, nor does it provide financial aid based directly or indirectly on the success in securing enrollment.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. *NOTE: "Recruiting practices" include all activities designed to attract students and lead to student enrollment. These include but are not limited to advertising, public outreach and promotion, correspondence with prospective students, and completing enrollment documents. "Recruiting personnel" refers to anyone whose primary responsibility is recruiting, contacting, or responding to prospective students. These staff positions may have different titles at different institutions, but all must comply with the following standards.*
2. Identify the staff members responsible for recruiting and/or admissions, including title and name.
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit job description(s) for any positions involved in recruiting and/or admissions, including qualifications, employment/compensation status, and reporting duties.
4. Describe a typical recruitment/enrollment process for a prospective student. For example: what methods are used to contact new leads; how are these leads followed; what activities do most prospective students participate in during the enrollment process; which staff members are involved?
5. Explain how the school's efforts focus on attracting qualified students who will benefit from the education and training?
6. Identify the laws or regulations which govern the recruiting of students in the state or local jurisdiction.
7. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of recruitment laws and regulations of the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution or program operates. *Highlight relevant sections.*
8. Are recruiters or admissions personnel required to be registered or licensed in your local jurisdictions? [Yes/No toggle]

9. **UPLOAD:** If registration/license is required (question above), submit evidence of current authorization.
10. Describe how the institution ensures that recruiting personnel are adequately trained and able to provide accurate and current information about the institution and all programs.
11. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the recruiting policies and procedures used to ensure that recruitment personnel and practices are legal, ethical, consistent, and accurate.
12. Describe any pending or completed investigations into the recruitment practices of the institution or the program by any regulatory agencies.

C. Catalog

1. A catalog and/or student handbook accurately portrays the institution and program, facilities, resources, and all policies and procedures and is readily available to all prospective students prior to signing an enrollment agreement.
2. A catalog and/or program student handbook contains (at minimum) all items in the COMTA Catalog Checklist.
3. The catalog and/or student handbook may be in either a printed or an electronic format, but all versions must be consistent and easily accessible to prospective and current students.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the format in which the institution publishes the information required in the COMTA catalog checklist.
2. When and how do students receive a copy of the catalog and/or student handbook?

D. Enrollment Agreements

The institution ensures that the applicant is fully informed of the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of both the institution and the student under an enrollment agreement or other documentation before enrollment into the institution.

1. Enrollment agreements are completed with all students prior to enrollment and must include, at a minimum, all required items listed on the Enrollment Agreement Checklist.
2. No enrollment agreement is binding until it has been signed by the applicant and accepted and signed by the appropriate school official.
3. A copy of the enrollment agreement is signed by all appropriate parties and furnished to the student before any payment is made.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Describe the process for signing the enrollment agreement, specifically addressing when this is done, who reviews it with the student prior to signing, and whether the student receives a copy.
2. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the Enrollment Agreement(s). If there are separate agreements for each program, submit all agreements for programs being considered for COMTA accreditation.
3. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the completed COMTA Enrollment Agreement Checklist.
4. **For Onsite Review:** Ensure that all student files contain signed enrollment agreements.

E. Non-discrimination

Admission requirements and procedures must comply with all local, state, and federal regulations.

1. Admissions policies may not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, nationality, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other status protected by law.
2. Institutions or programs reasonably accommodate applicants with disabilities to the extent required by applicable law.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the page(s) of the catalog and/or student handbook where the student non-discrimination policy is published.
2. Describe the process used to ensure that the school neither denies admission to nor discriminates against applicants with respect to protected statuses. Has the school provided reasonable accommodation for applicants with disabilities to the extent required by law?

F. Transfer Credit

Institutions develop, publish, and consistently implement clear policies regarding transfer of credit into the institution.

1. The transfer credit policy specifies the educational criteria guiding the acceptance of transfer credits, specifies the maximum number of transfer credits that can be accepted toward completion of an accredited program, and outlines the procedure for determining whether transfer credit will be granted.
2. Records of transfer credit and any supporting documentation remain in the student's file.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Does the institution accept transfer credit or award credit for prior learning? [YES/NO toggle]
2. [IF NO – only this question] Identify the page(s) in the catalog/handbook where the institution publishes the policy declaring that transfer credit is not awarded.
3. [IF YES – this question and all the rest in this section] Describe the institution's policy for accepting transfer credit and identify the page(s) in the catalog/handbook where the policy is published.
4. Describe the process used in determining transfer credit to be awarded and which staff members are involved.
5. For Onsite Review: Ensure that documentation is maintained in all student files for those who received transfer credit.

XIV. Student Records and Student Services

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Institutions should monitor and maintain complete records of student progress throughout the program. This includes a clear definition of what constitutes satisfactory academic progress and provisions for ensuring student adherence to the institution's policy. There is a connection between student success and the support services provided. Therefore, institutions are expected to consider the students' academic and non-academic needs to encourage student success. The institution should provide a variety of student services in accordance with its mission and any applicable laws and regulations, and such services should reflect the highest ethical standards.

A. Student Record Management

For all currently enrolled students, institutions maintain educational records, which include all admissions, academic, and financial records.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Institutions have a responsibility to maintain student records in compliance with all laws, including federal and state regulations (e.g., FERPA). Laws and standard practices for the content, confidentiality, security, and access of records should be followed consistently by all school personnel.

1. Educational records may be maintained electronically and/or in hard copy and both are accurate, organized, confidentially maintained, and secured from damage or loss (e.g., fire, water, theft, or tampering).
2. Institutions have and follow policies and procedures that comply with all applicable laws, including rights to access and confidentiality.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Are student files maintained electronically, in hard copy format, or both? If electronic, what system is used?
2. Describe the methods used to ensure that student files are accurate and complete.
3. Describe how the institution ensures student files are confidential and secured from damage or loss (e.g. fire, water, theft or tampering).
4. **UPLOAD:** Submit a copy of the published policy and communication regarding confidentiality and access to student educational records

B. Satisfactory Academic Progress

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The institution should take measures to ensure students are making steady progress toward graduation through Satisfactory Academic Progress policies, including regular monitoring and assistance for students not succeeding. The school can determine its own requirements for the policy as long as the following criteria are met. NOTE: For schools participating in Title IV financial aid, there are more specifics that must be met within this policy. (See Title IV Compliance Standard.)

1. Institutions offering any COMTA-accredited program have a policy for determining what constitutes satisfactory academic progress throughout that program.
2. The school's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy includes consideration of the following:
 - a. Quality of a student's academic work (i.e., grade percentage or grade point average).
 - b. Quantity or amount of time a student has been in the program (i.e., maximum time frame in which students must complete program requirements).
 - c. Clear increments of time when SAP will be assessed, not to exceed the program's midpoint or one year.
 - d. The official actions to be taken as a result of failure to meet SAP (e.g., warning letter, academic assistance, probation, termination).
 - e. An appeal process for those students who are terminated from the program and/or lose funding based on failure to meet SAP.
3. Student progress throughout the program is monitored and fairly applied to all students.
4. Those students failing to meet the policy should be duly informed and assisted prior to any adverse action.
5. Additional requirements apply for those institutions wishing to establish or maintain eligibility to administer federal student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. (See Title IV Compliance Standard.)

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Identify the page(s) in the catalog/handbook where the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy is published.
2. Describe the process for monitoring SAP, including who is responsible and when and how this is done.
3. Describe how the institution intervenes and communicates with students when satisfactory progress is not being met.
4. For Onsite Review: Provide documentation of monitoring and communication with students regarding SAP.

C. Student Services

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The services that an institution provides its students have a direct impact on the students' academic success. Specifics of the services provided may be at the discretion of the institution, based on its size and the demographics of its students.

1. The institution provides adequate student services and resources to support its students in maintaining satisfactory progress, achieving educational outcomes, and making informed decisions concerning training and employment. These services include but are not limited to:
 - a. Academic advising
 - b. Tutoring or other academic support
 - c. Placement services
 - d. Non-academic support (e.g., counseling and/or referrals)
 - e. Any other services as required by law
2. Student services are delivered and/or are accessible at the main campus and all branch campuses.
3. Institutions reasonably accommodate students with disabilities to the extent required by applicable law and regulation.
 - a. The institution has a process in place for determining and providing reasonable accommodations for students in accordance with law and regulation.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Describe the student services provided to students. For each service, indicate the staff member responsible and how all students have equitable access (time and location).
2. Describe the institution's process for determining and providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the law.
3. For Onsite Review: Provide an example of such accommodations noted above.

D. Student Code of Conduct

The institution has a published Student Code of Conduct/Academic Integrity Policy that includes clear expectations and disciplinary action for violations of the policy.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The Student Code of Conduct should be specific to student behavior while enrolled in the institution (e.g., no cheating), and thus in addition to encouraging a professional code of conduct in the field.

SSR Narrative Prompts & Exhibits:

1. Identify the page(s) in the catalog or student handbook where the Student Code of Conduct/Academic Integrity Policy is published.
2. Provide a summary of the disciplinary actions taken against students for violating the Code of Conduct within the past two years. *Do not include student names in description.*
3. For Onsite Review: Provide files with full documentation of the violation(s) and resultant action taken.

XV. Title IV Compliance

Institutions participating in United States Title IV Financial Student Aid (FSA) programs comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Participating in Title IV is a responsibility beyond accreditation. Many accreditation standards are intended to help a school be proactive in maintaining compliance with Title IV requirements.

A. Administration

Institutions demonstrate the administrative capability to participate in these financial aid programs through satisfactory results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and other information provided.

B. Loan repayment

Institutions participating in federal loan programs have in place appropriate measures designed to encourage students to repay their loans, and the institutions maintain an official student loan default rate that is below the federal threshold.

C. Required Disclosures

1. Institutions clearly publish all disclosures required by federal regulation.
2. The catalog of the institution accurately describes the financial aid programs in which it participates and includes the requirements students must meet to maintain eligibility for continued participation in these programs.
3. The institution's cancellation and refund policy clearly stipulates procedures for the return of Title IV funds in compliance with federal regulations.

D. Clock Hour to Credit Conversion

Institutions participating in Title IV must comply with Title IV regulations regarding the calculation of aid. Institutions may use the COMTA clock hour-to-credit conversion for academic purposes. (See COMTA Standard Academic Measurement Policy if applicable.)

E. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Those institutions wishing to establish or maintain eligibility to administer United States Title IV financial aid programs are required to use more specific criteria for their SAP policy. These institutions use the COMTA SAP Guidelines and Title IV regulations to develop their SAP requirements.

SSR Narrative/ Exhibits

1. Does this school participate in Title IV financial aid? [YES/NO toggle] **NOTE: If no, skip this section.**
2. When did the institution receive approval to participate?
3. Identify the page(s) in the catalog where financial aid is outlined.
4. Identify who is responsible for administering the program, the qualifications for fulfilling that role and the how this person remains current with changing Title IV regulations.

5. If external vendors or consultants administer (in whole or part) the financial aid programs, describe the activities performed on behalf of the institution.
6. State the number of currently enrolled students participating in the Title IV program and the percentage of total enrollment.
7. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the Title IV Program Participation Agreement (PPA) from the USDE.
8. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR).
9. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the most recent compliance audit report.
10. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the most recent Program Review conducted by the USDE.
11. Identify the loan default rate for each of the past three years.
12. UPLOAD: Submit a copy of the default rate communications from the USDE.
13. UPLOAD: If the rate falls below the threshold, submit a copy of the institution's default rate management plan.
14. Identify where the institution publishes all USDE-required disclosures.
15. *NOTE: The clock hour to credit conversion published in the catalog (required by checklist) will be compared against the COMTA Standard Academic Measurement Policy).*
16. *NOTE: The Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy submitted under Standard 14b will be evaluated using COMTA SAP Guidelines.*