



Standard III(B) Faculty Qualifications, Development and Evaluation Guidelines

Standard III. Faculty Qualifications

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: *The individuals involved in a program's execution are key to its success. Therefore, 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. These recommended guidelines will assist institutions in programs with complying with the COMTA Standards.*

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.

I. Faculty Qualifications Explanation

All instructors are academically and professionally qualified. To determine qualifications, the Commission will use the specific requirements listed in Standard III.B, as well as the following:

- The institution or program uses standards of instructional performance and professionalism to guide hiring, periodic reviews of performance and professional development of its faculty.
 - The Commission endorses the use of the Alliance for Massage Therapy Education (AFMTE) Core Competencies for Massage Therapy Teachers as an excellent model for such. See www.afmte.org for more information and to download a copy.
- To improve the quality of massage and esthetics education, the Commission is committed to emphasizing the instructional capabilities of those who teach in COMTA-accredited programs. The program should have methods in place to determine the instructional skills and abilities of its faculty members. This can include:
 - Demonstration of effective teaching
 - Documentation of successful past teaching experience
 - Evidence of coursework in education or adult learning methods
 - Direct training, mentorship, or orientation programs highlighting instructional skills for those who are otherwise qualified but may lack instructional experience.
- Qualifications for Anatomy, Physiology & Pathology - Instructors of the sciences have completed training that is broader and more advanced than the material being taught. If a program's science faculty do not have documentation to meet this criterion, the program is responsible for effectively demonstrating to the Commission how its faculty members meet the intent of the standard.
- The Commission seeks to encourage faculty members teaching anatomy, physiology and pathology to have a broad understanding of the sciences relevant to massage therapy and esthetics practice, as well as how these sciences apply specifically to clients and their health conditions that the students and graduates are likely to encounter.
 - Previously the Standards included the phrase “undergraduate proficiency” to describe these higher requirements of science knowledge.
 - Effective July 2017, the Commission replaced the phrase “undergraduate proficiency” with “advanced proficiency” in Standard III(B) to more accurately reflect the intent. This new Standard language supersedes all previous standard requirements and definitions.
- The Commission recommends that institutions and programs use the ELAP Blueprint (www.elapmassage.org) as a guide for determining what type of coursework faculty may

need to be prepared to teach the sciences at an appropriate level. In some cases, individuals who have been teaching for many years may find areas where further coursework would be beneficial. The Commission suggests that this coursework be completed within an accredited college or university, and transcripts be kept as documentation.

- When considering new faculty to be hired, COMTA suggests that programs and institutions either require advanced coursework in the sciences or commit to providing such development within the first year of faculty employment.

II. Orientation & Ongoing Professional Development

Upon hiring, schools are expected to provide sufficient orientation to all instructors. This should be more than the logistics of working in the school (i.e. how to use the copy machine). New instructors with limited teaching experience should be offered orientation/training in instructional skills at the time of hire to meet Standard III.B.1 and Standard III.C.2 (see resources below).

However, initial orientation is not enough. All faculty members must routinely participate in *ongoing* professional development in both technical knowledge and instructional skills, and documentation of such training is maintained by the institution.

“Technical knowledge” would be related to the content of what the instructor teaches. This could align with continuing education required to maintain a license to practice, therefore the institutional policy for ongoing development could mirror the requirements for maintaining licensure. Documentation of development should be maintained by the institution itself, rather than relying on the renewed license as adequate documentation.

“Instructional skills” are important to help faculty grow and improve as teachers, thus it is not necessarily related to content and the policy should require development which is different from any practitioner licensing requirements, including training in distance education delivery methods, when applicable. This may be done through formal coursework, seminars, professional conferences, mentorship, in-service, and other methods.

For massage therapy, COMTA especially recommends the ABMP Instructors on the Front Lines trainings, the AMTA Schools Summit, the ABMP School Issues Forum and the AFMTE meeting or Educational Congress.

For esthetics, many of the trainings available are specific to practitioner use of product lines and may have limited application in the classroom. COMTA recommends esthetics instructors look for courses that are approved by state education departments, continuing education seminars, and professional esthetics/ cosmetology organizations.

The school is not required to provide the training itself but it may do so (i.e. inservice trainings).

NOTE: In meeting this standard, the Commission expects to see evidence of published policies in place, as well as evidence that each instructor has participated in such training.

III. Instructor Evaluation

All instructors receive written evaluations on a regular and routine basis from their supervisor. These evaluations exhibit the following:

- The Commission prefers annual evaluations; however, “regular and routine” is allowed in those circumstances where annual reviews are not possible or practical due to:
 - Union contracts
 - Instructors who teach only infrequently and/or very few hours of program
 - Veteran faculty with past consistently stellar performance
 - Large numbers of instructors

In these cases, the institution is allowed to determine the most appropriate evaluation schedule as long as it can demonstrate how it is “regular and routine.”

- The evaluations should include:
 - Supervisor input based on written job expectations specific to instructional personnel
 - Direct observation of teaching by peer or supervisor
 - Student evaluations and feedback (what the students say about the quality of instruction)
- These features should be present in some form, but it is within the discretion of the institution/program how to do so to best meet its needs.
 - Some features may be weighted more heavily than others
 - Evaluations may be qualitative or quantitative.
 - A formal evaluation is required, but some features can be informal as long as all parties agree that the format meets the needs of the institution, faculty, and students.
 - The frequency of evaluations for veteran instructors may be different than for new instructors.

The Commission recommends contacting COMTA staff at info@comta.org or 202-888-6790 for further clarifications or to determine if your procedures meet the letter and spirit of the Standards.