



MASSAGE THERAPY SCHOOL EVALUATION CHECKLIST

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Use this comprehensive checklist to guide you in evaluating and selecting the massage school that is right for you. Print as many copies of this checklist and use one for every school you evaluate. In the end, review your notes and decide on the school that best fits your needs.

We recommend you get in touch with the school's admissions office and financial aid representative to get answers to most of these questions. Do not let the school tell you it is not their policy to discuss these matters. We recommend you go through this process before you make your decision, officially sign up for the massage program or pay any tuition. As you talk to the school's representatives, assess their honesty, openness and willingness to help guide you through this process. DO NOT be afraid to repeat your questions if you don't understand or are not satisfied with the answers. Do not be afraid to follow up with any concerns you might have at any time even after you have ended the discussion.

Finally, please keep in mind that massage schools, like any other institution, are in business to make money. That does not automatically make every massage school mal intended. Your job is to utilize this comprehensive checklist to determine which schools are the best schools that can genuinely deliver the experience and results you need.

- 1) Where is the school located? How much time will you spend daily on commute? What kind of expenses and how much will you incur related to commute / room and board if you are going to live close to school? Overall, can you afford both the time and cost of attending the school?

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- 2) Is the school accredited or non-accredited? If non-accredited, is it State certified and will it allow you to take the Certification exams and go on to become a Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT)? Non-accredited schools may end up more economical in some cases (they do not qualify for financial aid). However, make sure that you will be able to get your certificate and license by attending a non-accredited school.

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- 3) Are qualified applicants / prospective students eligible to apply for and receive Federal Financial Aid? Or ask the school whether they are part of the Title IV Funding Program, which qualifies their students to apply for financial aid. If the school qualifies, ask about the FAFSA form and support (if needed) in filling out and mailing the form. The FAFSA form is the form you need to fill out and send to the Government if you want to apply for financial aid. You can read more about the FAFSA form [here](#).

- 4) What is the cost of tuition, fees and any other material/supplies necessary to attend school? Make sure that you fully understand the exact dollar figure which should include all school related costs like tuition, fees, books, supplies, and other expenses. Understand what the cost is per year and over the course of the entire program, and be sure and ask about any foreseeable tuition increases (and the reason) while you'll be attending the school.

Additional follow up questions that will help you better understand tuition are the following:

- How much did tuition at this school cost last year?
- How much did it cost three years ago?

Ask the reasons for tuition increase. If you find that tuition has significantly increased each year, or there is a significant change from three years ago to today, try to determine the real reasons. In other words, was there truly inflation in the industry that caused all schools to hike their tuition rates by the same proportion, or does this school stand out as the anomaly? If the latter, there may be something fundamentally flawed with the school. At the least, this should be a red flag that helps you dig in further in determining whether this is the right school of choice for you.

- 5) Accredited schools are eligible for Federal Financial Aid. What is the anticipated tuition cost after factoring in anticipated / potential Financial Aid?

Note: This will help you determine the most economical option for you.



- 6) What days and times are classes offered? What if I miss a class – what are my make-up options?

Note: Your goal here is to determine whether the school is flexible enough so you can make it fit into your life schedule.

- 7) What is the school culture like? What are the main beliefs and philosophies? What does the school focus most on?

Note: This question is meant to reveal whether the school's philosophies and beliefs match yours. If they don't, you may want to consider another school.

- 8) What is the instructor teaching style? What is the mode of instruction?

Note: Everyone has a different way of learning. The goal of this question is to help you determine how well you will be able to remain engaged in class and learn the material being taught.

- 9) What does it take to do well in school? What are the characteristics/qualities that students who have succeeded in the school's program possess?

Note: Do you have these qualities? If not can you develop them?



10) What is the historical passing rate of students on certification exams?

Note: This will reveal how well the school prepares its students to pass the certification exams.

11) What is the historical job placement of graduates? What is the average time it takes for a new graduate to find full time employment?

Note: This will reveal how connected the school is and how vast its network and reputation is. In a good school, you want to see a high job placement rate within just a few weeks of graduation. Ideally, you'd like to see jobs lined up for students who can start working immediately upon graduation. Keep in mind that schools are required to disclose their actual rates of job placement and massage industry outlooks for their outlying communities. In addition to statistics from the financial aid office, talk to recent graduates of the school to get a realistic understanding of your job opportunities after you graduate. Read the additional tips below where you can obtain referrals and interview recent graduates.

12) What types of organizations / companies / employers have your students gone on to work with?

Note: This will reveal what types of employers the school attracts the most, or what employers the school's student body tends to gravitate toward.



13) What are the average starting salaries your students earn after graduation?

14) Massage is a physically demanding profession. What do you do in your school curriculum to ensure your students stay in good shape so that they can deliver client satisfaction once they start working? What kind of physical education do you incorporate in your classes?

15) How does financial aid impact admission possibilities?

Note: Most schools that participate in the Title IV funding program are allotted a limited amount of federal money to give to their students, regardless of the student's demonstrated needs. This means students who can pay for their tuition with their own money may potentially be given admission priority. This is not a practice we agree with, but it is the sad reality in many cases.

16) Aside from Federal Financial Aid, what other financial aid resources you provide your students with?

Note: Government funding is just one financial aid source. A good school should also offer scholarships (or point you to other scholarships available out there), low-interest payment plans, work-study opportunities or other pay-as-you-go options. Third-party private lenders should be examined carefully, since they may offer high interest rates or other undesirable long-term outcomes. Private student loans should be your absolute last option. Many students work part time to pay their way through school.



ADDITIONAL DUE DILIGENCE AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Campus Tour

Schedule a campus tour with each school and physically visit the school. Visit classrooms (preferably when in session) and observe the instructors, teaching styles, student engagement and interaction. Try to visualize yourself in that environment.

Curriculum Review

Ask the school to provide you with the curriculum. Go over this in detail and visualize yourself going through it.

Interview Instructors

Ask to sit down and chat with at least three instructors. Ask them what they like about the school. Ask them what can be improved about the school. Ask them why they do what they do. Ask them about their teaching methods and what types of students do well in their classes.

Interview Students

Ask for references to at least three current and three past students. Schedule time with each student and speak to them about their experience in the school. Ask them what they like, what can be improved, whether they are happy, whether their experiences matched their expectations and what they would do different if they were to do it all over again.

ADDITIONAL TIPS TO EFFECTIVELY & EFFICIENTLY EVALUATE MESSAGE SCHOOLS

The school evaluation process can be extremely time-consuming. Utilize these batch processing tips to shave off significant hours while maintaining the effectiveness of your due diligence.

Cookie Cutter Email Approach

Draft an email and copy and paste these questions in the body of the email. Send the same email to each school you are considering and simply modify the subject and To: fields so that each email appears to be crafted just for that school. You can generally find the school's contact information on their website. Indicate in your email that you are a prospective student in the evaluation stages and that you'd appreciate their responses to your questions as it would help you make a better decision for yourself.

To avoid drafting another email at a later date, go ahead and ask them to provide you with the following as well in their response:



- School / class curriculum
- Available dates for campus / classroom tour
- Names of instructors and students you can reach out to as references

Phone Conversations

If the school does not respond to your email, or asks you to call instead, block off time on your calendar to call multiple schools at a time. Have this checklist printed so you can go through it while on the phone. Going through this exercise over the phone as opposed to individual visiting each school will save you a significant amount of time. You will realize that some schools are just not a good fit, and therefore a visit to those schools would have been a waste of your time. Narrow down to the top 2 to 3 schools before you consider a visitation to be most efficient.

Monitor Response Rates

During your email and phone correspondence, take note of the time it takes the school to respond to your queries. Also make note of the effort they are putting in to ensure you get thorough answers that address your specific questions as opposed to automated cookie cutter responses or someone on the phone who is rushing you to close the conversation. Determine what the overall response time and thoroughness is. Also get a feel for the overall “experience”. This is going to be indicative of how the school will respond to your needs in the future.

Some of the questions above are focused particularly on financial aid. Understand that knowing your financial status and your expected contribution toward school expenses will really help you decide which school is right for you from a financial perspective.

If you think of additional questions students should be asking their school representatives, please email us at info@massagetherapyschoolsinformation.com so we can include them on this list. Together we can help more students avoid mistakes and select the best massage school for them.

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