

**Health and Public Safety Division**

**THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE PROGRAM  
Online Program Overview**

Congratulations on your decision to seek a degree as a massage therapist! It is an excellent profession to pursue...one worth the hard work that the educational process requires. By completing this online program overview, you are one step closer to reaching your career goal.

This online overview is to help you! Our goal is to:

- Provide specific program information
- Help to confirm your decision to enter the program
- Explain admission process for the program, and
- Provide you with forms necessary for completing the admission process. Print, sign and submit to Enrollment Services in the Welcome Center.

### **Therapeutic Massage Information**

Therapeutic Massage has many benefits. Most people know that massage relaxes muscles and relieves tension. But did you know that massage can have a sedative, stimulating or even exhausting effect on the nervous system depending on the type and length of massage treatment given?

Massage dilates (opens up) blood vessels, improving the circulation and relieving congestion. Massage increases the number of red blood cells, especially in cases of anemia. Massage increases the blood supply and nutrition to muscles without adding to their load of toxic lactic acid produced through voluntary muscle contraction. Massage thus helps to overcome harmful “fatigue” products resulting from strenuous exercise or injury. Massage improves the general circulation and nutrition of tissues. It is accompanied or followed by an increased interchange of substances between the blood and tissue cells heightening tissue metabolism. Massage can compensate, at least in part, for lack of exercise and muscular contraction in persons who because of injury, illness or age are forced to remain inactive. In these cases, massage helps return venous blood to the heart and so eases the strain on this vital organ.

Massage encourages the retention of nitrogen, phosphorous and sulfur necessary for tissue repair in persons convalescing from bone fractures. Massage improves the circulation and nutrition of joints and hastens the elimination of harmful particles. It also helps lessen inflammation and swelling in joints and so alleviates pain.

### **Employment Opportunities**

You have a wide range of career opportunities as a massage therapist. Massage therapists work in massage clinics, health clubs, chiropractic offices, hospitals, beauty salons, day spas or set-up your own private practice.

## Additional Program Fees

Additional fees are those not covered by tuition and does not include textbooks. You are responsible for purchasing these items.



- Massage Supply Kit: \$150 - \$200 (purchased through Western Campus Shop)
  - Sheets, Blanket, Face cradle covers, Oil/lotion bottles, Holster
- Massage Table: \$500 - \$750 (Do not purchase until discussed in class.)
  - Table, Bolster, Face Cradle, Shipping/Handling
- Western Technical College Therapeutic Massage Polo Shirt: \$22 - \$26

As a student in the Therapeutic Massage program, you will be working on your classmates and they will be working on you to learn the massage techniques. This means that you will be disrobing and may want to have a robe in the classroom with you. You will be modestly draped at all times during the learning process.

## Program Curriculum

The program requires two semesters of coursework. Presently the program is offered in a mid-afternoon/evening format. Students are advised that some associate degree coursework will transfer to the Therapeutic Massage program. However, the technical diploma credits earned in the program are not transferable to an associate or bachelors level program. See the program course outline at the [program's webpage](#) under the Curriculum tab.

## Becoming Licensed

The Therapeutic Massage program is a one year technical diploma that will provide you with the education, knowledge, and practical experience you need to begin a career as a professional entry-level massage therapist. You will have the option of taking the National Certification Board for massage therapists and body workers prior to or after graduation. Upon graduation and completion of the National Exam, you can apply to the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing for the exam to become State Licensed. Successful completion of the National and State Exam allows you to use the title of Wisconsin Licensed Massage Therapist.

## The Admission Process

Review the [Intent to Enroll Form](#) (click on link) to identify and complete the following admission requirements for the Therapeutic Massage Program:

### Step I – Application to the College

1. **Application to the College:** Complete and submit the Wisconsin Technical College System application. If you are interested in more than one program, you must complete an application for each program. A one-time \$30.00 application fee (made payable to Western) must be submitted with the application. Applications are available at Western in the Welcome Center, 400 Seventh Street North at the La Crosse campus or any Regional Learning Center location sites in Independence, Black River Falls, Tomah, Mauston, or Viroqua. Applications are also available online at <http://www.westerntc.edu/admissions>.

2. Submit **official transcripts** from high school and, if applicable, college. If submitting college transcripts, it is possible that you may have taken courses that can be applied towards your chosen program. To have your transcript evaluated for transfer of credit, complete and submit the Transfer Credit Evaluation form found under Transfer Forms at <http://www.westerntc.edu/transfer>.
3. **Placement tests** (COMPASS, ASSET, or ACT) You are required to take a placement test and meet the minimum scores unless the following applies:
  - If you have a bachelors or masters degree, you are not required to take placement tests.
  - If you have successfully completed (C grade or better) college level Written Communication or Beginning Composition, you are not required to take the Writing placement test.
  - If you have successfully completed (C grade or better) college level Basic Math or College Mathematics, you are not required to take the Math placement test.

Satisfactory placement scores for the Therapeutic Massage program can be obtained online at: [http://www.westerntc.edu/programs/program.aspx?PROGRAM\\_NBR=305371](http://www.westerntc.edu/programs/program.aspx?PROGRAM_NBR=305371) under the Admission Requirements tab.

Testing is available in La Crosse at the Western Technical College Campus Assessment Center or at the Regional Learning Center sites in Independence, Black River Falls, Tomah, Mauston, or Viroqua. For more information on placement tests, visit the assessment website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/admissions/assessment.asp>. If you take a placement test at another location, you must request that your scores be sent to Western.

Remediation courses are available for you if you do not meet the placement scores for the program. All remediation coursework must be completed prior to be accepted in the program. Students must retest after remediation.

## **Step II – Application to the Program**

1. **Complete this Online Program Overview:** You are doing this right now and are almost done. You must complete the [Intent to Enroll Form](#) (click to open) when you are prepared to begin your program of choice. Review the form to identify and complete the admission requirements specific to your program.

Please assure that all items have been completed, attached, and/or submitted to: Enrollment Services located in the Welcome Center on the La Crosse Campus. Call Enrollment Services at 608-785-9553 to schedule an appointment to review your paperwork with an Enrollment Services Advisor. **You are only allowed to submit the Intent to Enroll form at your mandatory Enrollment Services Advisor meeting.** Bring the Intent to Enroll form to your appointment with any un-submitted documentation. At this appointment, the Enrollment Services Advisor will finalize the admission process and provide you with an estimated start date. **At this time you will sign the second page of the Intent to Enroll form verifying that you have completed the requirements to enter the program and have been assigned an estimated start date.**

If you are unable to begin the program on the assigned start date, you will need to re-submit the Intent to Enroll Form and schedule another appointment. Students are unable to request a pass on their assigned date. They will be assigned a later start date upon resubmission of the Intent to Enroll Form.

2. Meet **reading requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
3. Meet **math requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
4. Meet **writing requirement** as noted in Step I item 3.
5. Read the **Essential Functions** (click to open) for your program. Essential Functions are a listing of the physical, cognitive, and mental abilities that you will need in order to complete the program. You must read the Essential Functions and complete the appropriate section on page two of the Intent to Enroll Form. If you have a documented disability, there may be accommodations that can be made to assist in your successful completion of the program. Please contact Disability Services at Western (608-785-9875) if you are in need of more information. **A change in your ability to perform any of the Essential Functions must be reported to Doreen Olson, Associate Dean (608-789-4757) or to your instructor immediately.**
6. Complete **Immunization Form** (click to open): The immunization information can usually be obtained from your personal physician. **You are not required to submit all of your immunization information except for the Tuberculosis (TB) skin test.** IMPORTANT: The immunization form MUST be signed by a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or nurse practitioner.

You must have documentation of a negative TB test for the past two years. If you do not have two consecutive years of TB testing, you must have a “two-step” TB test done. TB tests are done at your local physician’s office, county health departments or (for current Western students) at the UW-L Student Health Center located at the Health Science Center in La Crosse. You are required to maintain current TB tests until you graduate from the program. (i.e., renewed annually)

It is your responsibility to submit the immunization record with the TB tests indicated prior to or with the Intent to Enroll Form to Enrollment Services located in the Welcome Center so the documentation can be entered into your official student health record here at Western. The other immunizations are not required for admission to the program but you may want to obtain that information in order to maintain a record of your immunizations. You may be required to submit an immunization record for outside clinicals. This will be discussed during the first semester of coursework.

It is strongly recommended that you **maintain a copy** of all forms/verifications for your own personal record.

7. Complete the **Background Information Disclosure form** (click to open). The State of Wisconsin requires that individuals who will be working with vulnerable adults and/or children undergo a criminal background check. You must complete the form and submit the \$20 fee (made payable to Western Technical College) in order to meet this admission requirement. Western does not accept background checks conducted by third parties (i.e. your employer). You are required to disclose *all* past experiences with the law. **Any arrests or new charges**

**must be reported to Doreen Olson (608-789-4757), Associate Dean of Health and Public Safety within five (5) working days.** Failure to do so may result in program dismissal. In addition, if you have resided outside of Wisconsin in the past 3 years, you will be informed of how to obtain an out of state background check at your own expense.

Although the form itself refers to crimes, criminal convictions, and pending criminal charges, the information that comes back from the background check does include all contacts with law enforcement whether or not a criminal conviction occurred. Therefore, include contacts such as non-criminal traffic matters, arrests, charges for which you were acquitted, and charges that were pled down to an ordinance violation or forfeiture. This form is found at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/Forms/F8/F82064.pdf>.

If your background check reveals past experience with the law, two clinical sites will be contacted to determine the likelihood of your being able to complete a clinical experience at those sites. **Clinical sites have the right to refuse clinical placement to any student based on the background check results.** This information will assist you in understanding the likelihood of being able to complete the clinical courses for the program. If you have charges on your background check, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical experiences that most programs require. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at clinical sites. See Frequently Asked Questions for more information on the impact of a positive background check.

If a student is convicted of a felony he/she may not be able to practice in the State of Wisconsin according to the Department of Regulation and Licensing. Any potential student will want to check with DRL to review his/her case.

(See page 8 regarding Body Art and Piercings.)

8. Attain **CPR certification**: You are required to complete the **American Heart Association Basic Life Support for the Healthcare Provider certification** and provide a copy (front and back) of your card. Note: There are many different levels of CPR; be sure to register for **“BLS Healthcare Provider”**. You are required to maintain on file your CPR certification until you graduate. This may mean that you may have to take a renewal class during your time at Western. Click on [CPR BLS Healthcare Provider courses](#) to view those being offered at Western.
9. **Biology**: You are required to have successfully completed (C grade or better) one year of high school Biology. If needed, this requirement could be met at Western through Developmental Biology (through Instructional Support Services) or College Biology. If you are currently enrolled in biology, a notation can be made in your file to signify that you are in the process of completing this requirement. It is your responsibility to notify Enrollment Services when you have successfully completed the course.

It is recommended that students receive a massage prior to beginning the program in August.

Note: a variety of forms are required to be submitted as part of the admission process. The forms can be accessed on the [program webpage](#) (click to open) under the Admissions Requirements tab. If you are unable to print the forms, please contact an Enrollment Services Advisor to have the forms mailed to you.

Sandy Peterson	<a href="mailto:Petersons@westerntc.edu">Petersons@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9207
Deb Kaiser	<a href="mailto:Kaiserd@westerntc.edu">Kaiserd@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9078
Stacey Nelson	<a href="mailto:Nelsons@westerntc.edu">Nelsons@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9842

## Acceptance to a Program

Students will be admitted to this program once the student has completed the Intent to Enroll Form, met the program requirements and met with an Enrollment Services Advisor. Program admission is based upon a first come, first served basis. Once the program is filled, students will be admitted to the next term. If an opening occurs in an earlier term, you may be contacted.

In the event that the program is not full, applications will continue to be accepted until 3 weeks prior to the start of the program. Applicants who meet all admission requirements will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis until the program is full.

- ❖ It is to your advantage to complete the admission requirements as soon as possible.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. **What happens if there is something on my background check?**

First of all, it is very important that you be honest when completing the background check form. Some facilities may automatically refuse a student who is perceived to be less than truthful. Many programs require placement at multiple clinical sites. If a student has a positive background check (meaning that there is something in your background), two clinical sites will be contacted to determine the likelihood of accepting you for a clinical experience. You will be contacted regarding the response of the clinical sites so that you can make a decision as to whether or not to enter the program. Results of the inquiry to the clinical site is not a guarantee of being able to place you at every clinical site but will give you an indication of the likelihood of being able to be placed at some clinical site. It does not guarantee what will actually happen once you are in the program.

### 2. **Where can I go to get certified in CPR?**

First of all, be very careful that you are signing up for the correct course. You need to complete **American Heart Association Basic Life Support for the Healthcare Provider** (Western catalog number 47-531419). Click on [CPR BLS Healthcare Provider courses](#) to view those being offered at Western. You may want to contact local hospitals/clinics for their offerings.

### 3. **I didn't get in for next fall, do I really have to wait a year to get in?**

Yes and no. If another student would not be able to start at their assigned time, we would contact the next applicant on the list. For this reason, it is VERY important that Western has your most current address and phone number so that we are able to contact you.

If you don't get in to the program, you are strongly encouraged to complete your general studies prior to entering the program.

4. **I didn't get in for next fall, is there anything I have to do in order to keep my application current?**

Yes, students are required to submit updated TB results, maintain CPR certification and repeat the criminal background check if there has been a change.

5. **I've been accepted for a certain semester, but for whatever reason, I can't start.**

If you are unable to begin the program on the assigned start date, you will need to re-submit the Intent to Enroll form and schedule another appointment. You will be assigned a later start date upon resubmission of the Intent to Enroll form.

6. **I've changed my mind about entering the program and want to enter a different Health and Public Safety Division program. What do I do?**

If you change your mind on which program you would like to enter, complete a change of program form (available from Enrollment Services in the Welcome Center or click on link [Re-Entry/Change of Program form](#)). The good news is that if you are interested in another Health and Public Safety Division program many of the admission requirements (e.g. background check, immunization, etc) are applicable for other programs. However, you will be required to complete an online program overview session specific for the program as well as the Intent to Enroll Form.

7. **I've taken some courses at a different college. Do I have to retake them?**

Most students receive some credit for the courses that they have taken previously. Students who have previous college coursework should complete a Transfer Credit Evaluation form (available from the Registrar or under Transfer Forms at <http://www.westerntc.edu/transfer>). You will be notified if the other college credits will be placed on your Western transcripts.

8. **What if I'm trying to decide between more than one program?**

Counselors and Enrollment Services Advisors at Western are available to discuss career planning with you.

9. **Who do I contact if I have questions?**

*Questions specific to a program?* Contact the program head/faculty:  
Jeanne Johnson [johnsonj@westerntc.edu](mailto:johnsonj@westerntc.edu) or (608) 785-9253

*Questions related to career decisions:*

Contact a counselor through the Counseling Center (608) 785-9553.

*Questions on your admission status:*

Contact an Enrollment Services Advisor through email and include your name, ID # or birth date and your specific question to:

Sandy Peterson	<a href="mailto:PetersonS@westerntc.edu">PetersonS@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9207
Deb Kaiser	<a href="mailto:KaiserD@westerntc.edu">KaiserD@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9078
Stacey Nelson	<a href="mailto:NelsonS@westerntc.edu">NelsonS@westerntc.edu</a>	608-785-9842

## Last Thoughts

- You are responsible to make sure that you keep your contact information (address and phone number) current. You can keep your contact information current through your MyWestern student account or contact Enrollment Services at the Welcome Center.
- Pay close attention to the deadlines for completing admission requirements for the program. The CPR requirement takes the most time to complete (and classes fill quickly!). If you have not completed CPR, then your first order of business should be to find a CPR class and get signed up. The second most time consuming admission requirement is immunizations. Start working on completing the form immediately.
- Students in a health or public safety program are required to have a C grade or better in all general studies and program courses. Please see the Student Handbook and Planner for more information on College and Division policies. Click on Student Planner on our website at <http://www.westerntc.edu/currentstudents/>.
- It is your responsibility to submit updates/renewals of immunization/TB tests to Enrollment Services located in the Welcome Center so the documentation can be entered into your official student health record here at Western. It is strongly recommended that you **maintain a copy** of all forms/verifications for your own personal record.
- In the Health and Public Safety Division, you may display no Body Art or Piercing that might be considered offensive. Most employment settings have policies that are generally broad, however they do reserve the right to deny employment and student clinical/practicum/fieldwork placement if body art or piercings are found to be offensive to those in that setting. The wearing and displaying of jewelry in the health care or public safety setting is generally limited to wrist watches and wedding rings or small non-dangling earrings. The purpose of this limitation is related to infection control, safety and public perception of the employees while they are on duty.

If you have significant visible body art and piercings, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical/practicum/fieldwork experiences that most programs require. You may be asked to cover the body art with clothing or dressings or remove the piercings in order to complete your rotation. If your program has a more restrictive policy on body art or piercings, it will be enforced. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at those sites.

**Best wishes as you continue your journey towards entering a health or public safety program at Western Technical College. We look forward to working with you as you pursue a career in health or public safety.**

The admission requirements are subject to change without notice.  
This website will be updated at minimum on February 15 and October 15 of each year.