

Ensuring safe treatment and meeting clients goals

Therapists should be suitably skilled. Q Academy promotes professional practice and safe treatment of clients through thorough assessment and knowledge of common conditions and pathology. It is important that massage therapists know how to meet clients goals. This can only be done through knowing if there is a realistic expectation of a successful outcome based on a client's dysfunction.

The information contained in this document is not advice, it is simply provided as a tool for people seeking RPL to make an informed decision. Each person's situation is unique.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – this is a process where we can assess prior training, skills and knowledge gained from a wide range of sources. Evidence must be provided. Further assessment may be undertaken.

Direct Credit transfer (DCT) – this is only applicable if you hold a Unit of Competency (UOC) with the exact code and title that matches a UOC within the qualification we deliver. **In this case the information provided in this document is not applicable. This is only for RPL.**

Unit of Competency (UOC) – these are commonly called training packages that specify what has to be taught, evidence required and in some cases how or an amount.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) – this is a school that is approved to train and award nationally accredited qualifications from the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

1. Why do you want to complete this process

This is the most important question to assess, as the desired outcome may not be met through RPL, due to reputable professional associations and health funds having very specific requirements for training undertaken, this includes UOC gained via RPL.

The points listed below will outline why RPL may not be suitable in some cases.

Working in Australia as a 'Massage Therapist'

Australia is a self regulated massage industry, there are no laws against anyone advertising and providing service as a massage therapist. That then leaves the following considerations;

- Ensuring safe treatment (*addressed at the top*)
- Seeking employment
- Getting insurance cover for services provided
- Joining a professional association
- Health fund provider rebates

We will address each of these points first as they could heavily affect your decision to seek RPL. We will then cover further topics and explain in more detail some of the process required in broad terms. To go ahead further you will have to book a meeting in a campus.

Seeking employment

As a 'self regulated' market, people can work without qualifications, self employed or working as an employee. It is the choice of employers to set the standards they require for their therapists.

Insurance cover for Massage Therapists

There are two levels of cover; Professional Indemnity and Public Liability*. The normal path is to become a member of a professional association and then that will give you access to specific insurance policies. However this isn't the only way, insurance brokers can be consulted independently to find a policy that meets your needs.

We will not define these, searching the internet will explain these in detail. It is important that insurance cover include both types in the policy and cover specific treatments or products.

Joining a Professional Association

There are many associations, Q Academy only recommends and works in conjunction* with several of the 'top tier' associations. However there are many out there! Some will have very 'relaxed' membership guidelines. People with limited training or training gained overseas may be able to join. Those associations will most likely not be able to give access to health fund provider status. There are usually different membership levels in associations based on qualification level.

**RTO's provide information to associations about their course such as those required by health funds. Associations can then undertake reviews and audit RTO's to ensure what is stated is practiced. This ensures the RTO's graduates will meet all health fund requirements and receive 'blanket' acceptance upon membership. This includes graduates who achieve qualifications via RPL.*

Health Fund provider status

Therapists must hold the Diploma of Remedial Massage to be able to offer rebate to clients, they then have to be registered with the health funds. This is done by the professional association.

Health funds have specific minimum requirements for members. These not only include the Diploma qualification, some require face-to-face delivery of training, duration of study and hours of study on specific content. Most schools have to prove they meet these requirements to the associations who then put their graduates forwards. For these reasons health fund provider status isn't a simple process.

Once a therapist holds provider status they have a requirement to meet minimum standards of practice and can be audited at any time by the health fund to provide evidence these standards have been met – it is serious undertaking!

Do you still want to apply for RPL?

For some people the primary benefit is health fund provider status, for this you will have to gain a Diploma of Remedial massage. The RPL process is bound by strict policy and rules due to the standards required. There is a time and fiscal expense in the RPL process, sometime significant, as we have to independently assess your knowledge and skill, when paying for this we cannot guarantee any outcome. It is very unlikely that someone will qualify for RPL to the whole Diploma of Remedial Massage without further study which will take further time and expense.

2. You still want to apply for RPL

To start off with it is important that we outline why we have to take a strict approach to RPL and what factors we have to take into account when assessing your application.

These points are very important to read and understand, as these will heavily affect your ability and overall success in applying for RPL. We have an obligation to meet all current guidelines. These are subject to change at any time. Current approval does not guarantee future approval.

3. AQF and guidelines for RTO's

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) we have a number of different elements to take into account, with published standards for courses and our operation. Within all activities undertaken we will ensure that all of these are abided by.

Qualification courses have published requirements, these are what are commonly called "training packages" and stipulate the training and assessment that must be undertaken to be issued a unit of competency. These are freely available online from <http://training.gov.au/> it is highly recommended that you access this website, search "HLT52015" and review the documents provided. This is what you will be assessed against during the RPL process.

During the RPL process it is a requirement we assess your prior learning against all the points listed in these documents. The lowest that RPL can be applied is to the unit, we cannot give partial units.

Some units will not be eligible as people from other areas of study, or other countries, will not be familiar with the content within unit. As example "work health and safety" contains specific information about the Australian workplace safety requirements. There are also units that specify content knowledge must be applicable to the area of work, something like "anatomy and physiology" is applied to the area of work and conditions that are likely to be encountered.

4. Industry guidelines

It is important that we thoroughly assess the training that you have undertaken to ensure that it also meets requirements as specified by "industry" that can include associations, health funds and clinics that employ therapists.

As previously mentioned health funds specify to association's further criteria that must be met if there members are to obtain a provider number. This includes RPL. The main ones to take into account are listed below under "Medibank Private and HCF Guidelines". We have to validate the training undertaken previously to ensure the end result meets these listed requirements.

If we feel that the training they have previously undertaken does not meet the requirement we will discuss options that may include further training to meet these requirements.

5. Medibank Private and HCF Guidelines

At the time of printing, Medibank private and HCF have outlined their own education requirements. These still need to be assessed in RPL. The main ones;

- Duration of study must have been 12 months full-time or 18 months part-time;
- Courses delivered fully online will not be accepted;
- practical course components including surface anatomy, palpation, clinical examination, assessment of conditions, treatment plans, tactile therapies, massage techniques and other associated therapeutics and techniques must also be completed on campus;
- All training is delivered and completed in English;

If you fail to meet any of these criteria then we cannot put you forward as a graduate that meets the health fund criteria. You would then have to undertake training with us to meet these criteria.

6. Types of evidence required

We need to see the original certificates and statement as issued by the training provider. As we need to show how your training meets all the listed requirements of a UOC then sufficiently detailed supporting evidence must be provided. This could include course syllabus, assessments, logbooks, awards, published articles or other documented evidence. You can also supply third party evidence such as references from employers or clients to support evidence, third party document cannot be used as primary evidence.

7. First Aid

You will need a current first aid unit of competency. This unit is recommended for update every three years. Please ensure that this is current. It must match the exact code listed below.

HLTAID003 Provide first aid

It cannot be assessed via RPL. You can supply evidence of having this or undertake the training with Q Academy.

8. How long will an application take?

You should allow up to 30 working days for processing of your applications, so that sufficient and due consideration can be given to your situation. In addition to providing documented evidence, you will most likely be required to undergo additional on-site testing to prove your competency.

Once assessed, you will be advised in writing of the outcome of your application. You may appeal the original decision. In such instance, a written appeal against a decision not to grant you RPL must include additional evidence to support your appeal. Q Academy is committed to ensuring that all applications for RPL are assessed fairly and promptly.