

**THE SPORTS MASSAGE ASSOCIATION.
CRITERIA FOR PERSONAL ASSESSMENT ENTRANCE EXAMINATION**



THE FOLLOWING TABLES LIST THE REQUIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR LEVEL 3, 4 & 5 SPORTS MASSAGE QUALIFICATIONS.

THE SMA WRITTEN & PRACTICAL ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT IS SET AT LEVEL 4. IN THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS BASED ON THE LEVEL 4 CRITERIA HIGHLIGHTED IN BLUE.

IT WILL BE ASSUMED THAT YOU HAVE ATTAINED LEVEL 3 COMPETENCY IN SPORTS MASSAGE. IT IS HOWEVER POSSIBLE THAT LEVEL 3 QUESTIONING, BASED ON THE TEXT HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN, WILL ARISE DURING THE VIVA STYLE INTERVIEW THAT FOLLOWS THE PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT.

Anatomy and Physiology for Sports Massage – Section 1		
Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p>1. Understand the structural organisation of the human body</p> <p>a. Outline the structural organisation of the human body b. Describe the structure of the human cell c. Describe the functions of the human cell d. Describe the different types of human tissue e. Explain the functions of the different types of human tissue</p>		
<p>2. Understand the structure and functions of the skin</p> <p>a. Describe the structure of the skin b. Describe the functions of the skin</p>		
<p>3. Understand the structure and functions of the skeletal system</p> <p>a. Describe the structure of the skeletal system b. Describe the functions of the skeletal system c. Explain the classification of bones d. Explain the stages of bone growth and repair</p>		
<p>4. Understand the structure and functions of joints</p> <p>a. Describe the different joint categories b. Explain the structure of synovial joints c. Describe joint actions at the major joints d. Explain the characteristics of ligaments e. Explain the characteristics of tendons</p>	<p>1. Understand the anatomy and physiology of the major joints of the body</p> <p>a. Identify bony structures associated with the major joints b. Explain the functions of bony structures associated with the major joints c. Identify soft tissue structures located at the major joints d. Explain the function of soft tissue structures located at the major joints e. Explain the different types of joint-end feel</p>	

<p>5. Understand the structure and functions of the muscular system</p> <p>a. Describe the characteristics of the types of muscle tissue</p> <p>b. Locate the major anterior and posterior skeletal muscles</p> <p>c. Identify and locate the muscle attachment sites for the major muscles of the body</p> <p>d. Describe the action of the major anterior and posterior skeletal muscles</p> <p>e. Describe the roles of muscles during movement</p> <p>f. Explain the different types of muscle contraction</p> <p>g. Explain the principles of muscle contraction</p>		
<p>6. Know the structure and functions of the nervous system</p> <p>a. Describe the structure of the nervous system</p> <p>b. Outline the functions of each subdivision of the nervous system</p> <p>c. Explain the characteristics of the different types of nerves</p>		<p>1. Understand neurological presentations</p> <p>a. Describe the pathways of peripheral nerves</p> <p>b. Define the characteristics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dermatomes • myotomes <p>c. Explain the organisation of dermatomes</p> <p>d. Describe common causes of neurological damage</p> <p>e. Describe common peripheral neuropathy patterns</p> <p>f. Describe presentations that warrant neurological testing:</p> <p>Motor nerves</p> <p>Sensory nerves</p> <p>g. Describe the</p> <p>Pathophysiology of shoulder</p> <p>Pathophysiology of elbow</p> <p>Pathophysiology of wrist and hand</p> <p>Pathophysiology of back and neck</p> <p>h. Explain the importance of referral for neurological testing</p>
<p>7. Understand the structure and functions of the endocrine system</p> <p>a. Describe the structure of the endocrine system:</p> <p>b. Explain the role of hormones</p> <p>c. Name key hormones and their actions</p>		
<p>8. Understand the structure and functions of the cardiovascular system</p> <p>a. Describe the structure of the cardiovascular system</p> <p>b. Describe the functions of the cardiovascular system</p> <p>c. Describe the flow of blood around the circulatory system</p> <p>d. Describe the composition of blood</p> <p>e. Describe blood pressure</p> <p>f. Describe factors that may affect blood pressure</p>		

<p>9. Understand the structure and functions of the respiratory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe the structure of the respiratory system b. Describe the functions of the respiratory system c. Identify the main muscles involved in breathing d. Describe the passage of air through the cardio-respiratory systems including gaseous exchange 		
<p>10. Understand the structure and functions of the lymphatic system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline the structure of the lymphatic system b. Describe the functions of the lymphatic system c. Describe the structure of a lymph node d. Explain the functions of a lymph node e. State the location of the major lymph nodes 		
<p>11. Know the structure and functions of the digestive system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline the structure of the digestive system b. Outline the functions of the digestive system 		
<p>12. Know the structure and functions of the urinary system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline the structure of the urinary system b. Outline the function of the urinary system 		
<p>13. Understand the effects of sports massage on the body systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the physical effects of sports massage b. Explain the physiological and neurological effects of sports massage c. Explain the psychological effects of sports massage 	<p>2. Understand the effects of anatomy, physiology and pathology on human function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe the characteristics of common postural types b. Explain the effects of postural deviations c. Describe the pathophysiology of common injuries/soft tissue dysfunction d. Explain how the ageing process affects the musculoskeletal systems 	

Professional Practice in Sports Massage – Section 2		
Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p>1. Understand legislation required in sports massage</p> <p>a. Explain how current legal obligations relate to the sports massage therapist</p> <p>b. Explain the importance of having a chaperone present when working with children and vulnerable adults</p> <p>c. Explain the importance of obtaining and working within boundaries of informed consent</p> <p>d. Describe what information needs to be given to clients to obtain informed consent</p> <p>e. Evaluate the consequences of non compliance with legislation and professional standards</p>		
<p>2. Understand scope of practice in sports massage</p> <p>a. Describe cautions and contra-indications to sports massage</p> <p>b. Distinguish the actions to take if presented with cautions or contraindications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local • Systemic <p>c. Describe referral procedures when working with other professionals</p> <p>d. Describe how to communicate with others in a professional manner</p>		
<p>3. Understand the standards relevant to the sports massage profession</p> <p>a. Discuss key principles of professional standards as stipulated by sports massage membership organisations</p> <p>b. Evaluate the roles of professional organisations relating to sports massage</p> <p>c. Explain the purpose of regulation</p> <p>d. Explain the importance of continuing professional development</p> <p>e. Describe the protocol to follow when presented with an emergency situation</p> <p>f. Describe insurance requirements for sports massage practice</p>		

<p>4. Understand the principles of professional practice in sports massage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the importance of valuing equality and diversity when working with clients b. Explain the importance of professionalism c. Explain the personal and clinical standards expected of the sports massage therapist d. Explain the importance of good communication skills e. Describe advantages/disadvantages of different means of communication 		
<p>5. Understand how to produce, maintain and store client records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the importance of accurate and confidential record keeping b. Explain what information should be recorded c. Explain the principles to apply when recording treatments d. Explain the legal requirements for the storage and disposal of records 		

Sports Massage Treatments – Section 3		
Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p>1. Be able to carry out client assessment</p> <p>a. Carry out subjective assessments of clients</p> <p>b. Obtain informed consent before carrying out physical assessments</p> <p>c. Carry out objective assessments of clients</p>	<p>1. Be able to conduct subjective and objective assessment</p> <p>a. Carry out subjective assessments of clients</p> <p>b. Obtain consent for objective assessments</p> <p>c. Carry out objective assessments of clients</p> <p>d. Record client information in accordance with professional practice requirements</p> <p>e. Store clients' information as legally required</p> <p>6. Understand the principles and practice of objective assessment techniques</p> <p>a. Explain the methods and purpose for a range of objective assessment techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asymmetry (methods and purpose) • Palpation (methods and purpose) • Range of movement (methods and purpose) – Active, Passive • Resisted strength tests • Postural analysis (methods and purpose) • Functional tests (methods and purpose) • Special Tests (methods and purpose) <p>b. Explain how to interpret findings for each objective assessment technique</p> <p>c. Critically evaluate the range of objective assessment methods used to gather information</p>	<p>1. Be able to undertake assessment of sports specific postures and gait</p> <p>a. Carry out gait analysis:</p> <p>b. Interpret findings identifying strengths and areas for improvement:</p> <p>2. Be able to conduct complex assessment methods for sports massage</p> <p>a. Carry out subjective assessments of clients</p> <p>b. Obtain consent for objective assessment</p> <p>c. Carry out objective assessments of clients</p> <p>d. Analyse subjective and objective findings</p> <p>e. Complete clinical reasoning forms</p> <p>f. Record clients' information in accordance with professional practice requirements</p> <p>g. Store clients' information as legally required</p> <p>3. Understand sports specific posture and gait</p> <p>a. Explain the phases of the gait cycle</p> <p>b. Outline the different methods used to analyse gait</p> <p>c. Describe foot deformities and their effects on gait</p> <p>d. Describe gait abnormalities:</p> <p>e. Explain how postural deviations can effect sporting performance</p> <p>f. Understand the principles of sports specific posture analysis</p> <p>4. Understand the principles and practice of complex assessment methods for sports massage</p> <p>a. Critically evaluate the range of complex assessment methods used to gather information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective: • Range of movement (active, passive) • Resisted (isometric) • Postural analysis • Special tests (ligamentous, neural) <p>b. Explain yellow flags and their potential impact on prognosis</p> <p>c. Explain red flags and the importance of urgent medical referral</p> <p>d. Explain the process of clinical reasoning and stages of problem solving</p>

<p>2. Be able to devise sports massage treatment plans</p> <p>a. Devise massage strategies relevant to collated information</p> <p>b. Present massage strategies to clients and obtain informed consent</p>	<p>2. Be able to devise a sport massage treatment plan</p> <p>a. Devise treatment plan</p> <p>b. Explain rationale for chosen massage interventions</p> <p>c. Present massage interventions and rationale to clients</p> <p>d. Obtain consent for treatment</p> <p>4. Understand the influences and effects of client information on treatment planning</p> <p>a. Explain factors which may predispose clients to injury and dysfunction</p> <p>b. Explain how factors may influence a client's ability to recover from injury</p> <p>c. Give examples of how subjective information may influence treatment planning</p> <p>d. Identify reasons for treatment deferral and referral</p>	<p>5. Be able to devise a sports massage treatment plan from information gathered</p> <p>a. Devise treatment plan</p> <p>b. Explain rationale for chosen massage strategies</p> <p>c. Present massage strategies and rationale to clients</p> <p>d. Obtain consent to treatment</p>
<p>3. Be able to apply sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Prepare treatment area, equipment and self for sports massage</p> <p>b. Prepare clients for sports massage</p> <p>c. Position clients for comfort, dignity and maximal effectiveness</p> <p>d. Carry out massage methods that meet the presentation and needs of the client</p> <p>e. Adapt own posture and position throughout application to ensure safe and effective application</p> <p>f. Monitor visual and oral feedback and adapt treatment strategy</p> <p>g. Remove massage medium when necessary</p> <p>h. Maintain interaction with clients throughout the massage</p> <p>i. Apply and maintain professional standards throughout treatments</p> <p>j. Restore working environment to safe and hygienic condition</p>	<p>3. Be able to apply soft tissue techniques in sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Prepare clients for soft tissue techniques</p> <p>b. Position clients for comfort, dignity and maximal effectiveness</p> <p>c. Demonstrate a range of soft tissue techniques: <i>Soft Tissue release, Connective Tissue, Corrective Frictions, Trigger Points, Muscle Energy Techniques</i></p> <p>d. Monitor tissue response throughout treatments</p> <p>e. Gain feedback from clients throughout treatments</p> <p>f. Adapt soft tissue techniques to meet the needs of clients</p> <p>g. Adapt own posture and position throughout application to ensure safe and effective application</p> <p>4. Understand the principles of soft tissue techniques used in sports massage</p> <p>a. Describe a range of soft tissue techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft tissue release • Connective tissue • Corrective frictions • Trigger points • Muscle energy techniques <p>b. Explain the protocols to follow for each soft tissue technique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft tissue release (cautions and applications) • Connective tissue (cautions and applications) • Corrective frictions (cautions and applications) • Trigger points (cautions and applications) • Muscle energy techniques (cautions and applications) <p>c. Critically evaluate the effects of each soft tissue technique</p>	<p>6. Be able to apply complex massage techniques</p> <p>a. Prepare clients for complex massage techniques</p> <p>b. Position clients for comfort, dignity and maximal effectiveness</p> <p>c. Locate bony and soft structures associated with treatment area</p> <p>d. Demonstrate a range of soft tissue techniques: <i>Myofascial release, positional release, PNF, active isolated stretching</i></p> <p>e. Monitor tissue response throughout treatments</p> <p>f. Gain feedback from clients about the techniques throughout treatment</p> <p>g. Adapt complex massage techniques to meet the needs of clients</p> <p>h. Adapt own posture and position throughout application to ensure safe and effective application</p> <p>i. Evaluate the effectiveness of complex massage technique</p> <p>j. Adapt treatment plan based on evaluation of treatments</p> <p>k. Present aftercare advice to clients, providing opportunities for questions</p>

		<p>7. Understand the principles of complex techniques used in sports massage</p> <p>a. Describe a range of complex techniques used in sports massage, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myofascial • Positional release • PNF • Active isolated stretching <p>b. Explain the protocols to follow for complex techniques used in sports massage, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myofascial – Technique and contra-indications • Positional release – Technique and contra-indications • PNF – Technique and contra-indications • Active isolated stretching – Technique and contra-indications <p>c. Critically evaluate the effects of each technique</p> <p>d. Critically evaluate the benefits of sports massage for pre-existing conditions</p> <p>8. Understand aftercare methods to complement complex massage techniques for sports massage</p> <p>a. Describe range of aftercare methods, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility relevant to condition • Proprioception • Isometric strengthening <p>b. Evaluate the purpose and benefits of each aftercare method</p> <p>c. Explain the safe and effective use of each aftercare method</p> <p>d. Explain contraindications and precautions for each aftercare method</p> <p>e. Explain possible side effects and adverse effects of each aftercare method</p>
<p>4. Be able to evaluate sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Carry out post-massage assessments of clients</p> <p>b. Obtain feedback from clients</p> <p>c. Reflect on feedback received and self analysis of treatment</p> <p>d. Evaluate treatment and identify areas and opportunities for improvement</p> <p>e. Present aftercare advice to clients, providing opportunities for questions</p> <p>f. Record massage sessions as legally required</p>		

<p>5. Understand the history and development of massage</p> <p>a. Summarise the history and origins of massage</p> <p>b. Explain the development of sports massage</p> <p>c. Explain how sports massage can complement other therapies and treatments</p>		
<p>6. Understand the fundamentals of sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Explain the contexts in which sports massage is used, to include</p> <p>b. Explain the requirements of a suitable environment for sports massage</p> <p>c. Identify types of equipment needed for sports massage, giving reasons</p> <p>d. Identify signs and symptoms of contra-actions</p> <p>e. Identify the therapist's subsequent response to contra-actions</p> <p>f. Describe a range of sports massage techniques, to include: Effleurage, pétrissage, frictions, tapotement, compressions, vibrations, passive stretching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods • Application • Effects • Safety considerations <p>g. Explain the importance of positioning and posture for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports massage therapist/practitioner • Client • Use of props <p>h. Describe effects and benefits of commonly used mediums in sports massage</p> <p>i. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of commonly used mediums in sports massage</p>		<p>9. Understand evidence based practice</p> <p>a. Explain the concept of evidence-based practice</p> <p>b. Explain the importance of evidence-based practice in sports massage</p> <p>10. Be able to evaluate research undertaken on sports massage</p> <p>a. Critically appraise research undertaken on the use of sports massage</p> <p>b. Draw conclusions on support for the use of sports massage</p>
<p>7. Understand how to assess and screen clients for sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Describe what is meant by subjective and objective assessments</p> <p>b. Explain methods of carrying out subjective and objective assessments</p> <p>c. Explain reasons for use of subjective and objective assessments</p> <p>d. Explain the value of client consultation</p> <p>e. Explain the importance of accurate client assessments and reassessments</p>		

<p>8. Understand evaluation of sports massage treatments</p> <p>a. Describe methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments</p> <p>b. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of evaluation methods</p> <p>c. Explain the importance of providing opportunities for further feedback</p> <p>d. Explain the importance of self-reflection</p>		
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Units Specific to Level – Section 4		
Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p>Understand the Principles of Soft tissue Dysfunction</p> <p>1. Understand soft tissue dysfunction</p> <p>a. Differentiate between soft tissue injury and dysfunction</p> <p>b. Explain the types of soft tissue injuries</p> <p>c. Describe common causes of soft tissue injury</p> <p>d. Differentiate between the severity of injuries</p> <p>e. Describe common causes of soft tissue dysfunction</p> <p>f. Describe signs and symptoms of soft tissue dysfunction</p>	<p>Treatment modalities to support soft tissue repair</p> <p>1. Understand treatments to support soft tissue repair</p> <p>a. Explain the aims of treatments to support soft tissue repair during the acute stage of injury</p> <p>b. Describe treatment protocols to use with clients during the acute stage of injury</p> <p>c. Explain the aims of treatments to support soft tissue repair during sub-acute stage of injury</p> <p>d. Explain which treatment options support the sub-acute stage of injury</p> <p>e. Explain the aims of treatments to support soft tissue repair during the chronic stage of injury</p> <p>f. Explain which treatment options support the chronic stage of injury:</p>	
<p>2. Understand the process of repair of soft tissue</p> <p>a. Describe the process of soft tissue repair</p> <p>b. Describe factors that may influence soft tissue repair</p> <p>c. Explain the importance of the inflammatory process</p>	<p>2. Understand the use of cryotherapy during soft tissue repair</p> <p>a. Explain the physiological and neurological effects of using ice during soft tissue repair</p> <p>b. Describe methods of applying cryotherapy during soft tissue repair</p> <p>c. Identify contra-indications to cryotherapy</p> <p>d. Describe adverse reactions to cryotherapy</p> <p>e. Explain actions to take in the event of an adverse reaction</p>	

	<p>3. Understand the use of heat treatments during soft tissue repair</p> <p>a. Explain the physiological and neurological effects of using heat during soft tissue repair</p> <p>b. Describe methods of applying heat during the soft tissue repair process</p> <p>c. Identify contra-indications to heat treatments</p> <p>d. Describe adverse reactions to heat treatments</p> <p>e. Explain actions to take in the event of an adverse reaction</p>	
Principles of Health and Fitness		
<p>1. Understand the benefits of an active, healthy lifestyle</p> <p>a. Explain what constitutes an active, healthy lifestyle</p> <p>b. Describe the benefits of leading an active, healthy lifestyle</p>		
<p>2. Understand the effects of exercise on the body</p> <p>a. Describe the short and long term effects of exercise on the body systems</p> <p>b. Describe the blood pooling effect following exercise</p> <p>c. Identify the types of activities likely to cause delayed onset of muscle soreness</p>		
<p>3. Know the components of fitness</p> <p>a. Define the health related components of fitness</p> <p>b. Define the skills related components of fitness</p> <p>c. Identify the factors that affect health and skill related fitness</p>		
<p>4. Know the principles of training</p> <p>a. Identify the principles of training</p> <p>b. Describe the physiological implications of each training principle</p> <p>c. Describe signs and symptoms that may indicate overtraining</p>		
<p>5. Understand the importance of healthy eating</p> <p>a. Explain the dietary role of key macro nutrients:</p> <p>b. Explain the dietary role of key micro nutrients:</p> <p>c. Identify common dietary sources for key macro and micro nutrients</p> <p>d. Explain the importance of adequate hydration</p> <p>e. Explain current healthy eating guidelines</p> <p>f. Explain the importance of healthy eating in relation to growth, repair and injury</p> <p>g. Explain professional boundaries when offering healthy eating advice</p>		

