

Two of the Most Important Questions to Ask When Looking At Massage Schools

by Peggy M. Huff

(Adapted from futureLMT.com) (blue italics added)

There are many important questions to ask any massage school you may be considering attending. Some of the more common questions are ones that include costs, calendars, length of program, age requirement and educational prerequisites. But there are questions that most potential students do not think or know to ask.

One such example is, **“How long has your school been in operation?”**

This is a very important question, and not always an obvious question to ask. Some massage-school owners will make it appear they are big and experienced, and worst of all, a healthy and viable school, when they are anything but. A perfect example of how this question can be a vital one is that I recently discovered a new massage school Web site that made such claims as “24 Years in Massage Therapy Education!” In this example, not only had this school not even opened its doors yet, its building hadn’t been built. Not only that, but the owner never previously owned a massage school. The company advertised classes were to start in March 2008. I wonder if it accepted tuition from folks who didn't ask this question. *Healing Mountain Massage School has been in operation for 13 years, and its’ director & founder has been practicing massage for 20 year, writing massage-related books and teaching massage for 18 years (italics added).*

An example of a question that potential students would not even know to ask would be, **“What is your school’s pass rate on the National Certification Exam?”**

Any massage school that is worth its salt is approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB). This board provides a National Certification Exam that is required in many states as a requirement to practice in that state, or to be able to apply for licensure to practice in that state. Each school is provided with annual pass rates, which indicate how many of that school’s graduates took the exam, and of those, what percentage passed the exam. As a massage-school owner, I know this is an indication of the quality of education a student receives, and if a school’s pass rate is low, it is not providing an adequate education. Last year, my school’s pass rate was 97 percent, and we proudly maintain a pass rate in the high 90s, year ' after year. The national average pass rate for massage schools is low, 69 percent. That means for every massage-school graduate that takes the National Certification Exam, only 69 out of 100 graduates pass. It also means that 31 out of 100 fail. Their massage school obviously did not provide an adequate education, and all that time and money was wasted if they could not pass the exam. I recently spoke to a gentleman who is planning on attending my massage school, and I told him to ask this question of any other school he might be considering. He told me a school he contacted said they “couldn’t remember what their pass rate was.” Gee, I wonder why?

Anyone considering going to massage school is making a tremendous investment of their time and money. And there are schools out there that can be a waste of your valuable resources if you don't know which questions to ask. When you ask these questions, you can also ask for proof. Any school that has statistics such as its National Certification Exam pass rate, will have this in writing from the National Board. Ask for a copy, especially if the school boasts a 100 percent pass rate. And to any school that does have a 100 percent pass rate, my hat is off to you in admiration and respect. *During the past academic year (2009-2010) Healing Mountain Massage School has an NCE pass rate of 100% for both it's SLC and Cedar campuses. It's graduation rates for both campuses during the same time period were 84-94% respectively, and job placement rates for the same time period were 82-94% respectively (information based on the school's most recent annual report submitted to the ABHES accreditation bureau in suburban Washington, DC) (italics added).*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Peggy M. Huff is the executive director of the Center for Massage & Natural Health® in Asheville, North Carolina. She began the development of her massage school in 1998 and now in its 10th year, it successfully graduates approximately 100 students annually. Her six-month, 600-hour Massage Therapy Certification Program, Equine Massage Therapy Program and Continuing Education Workshops attract students from all around the world. Her institution is COMTA Accredited (Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation), NC State Board Approved, VA Approved (for qualifying students), members of AMTA (American Massage Therapy Association), ABMP (Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals), the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau.