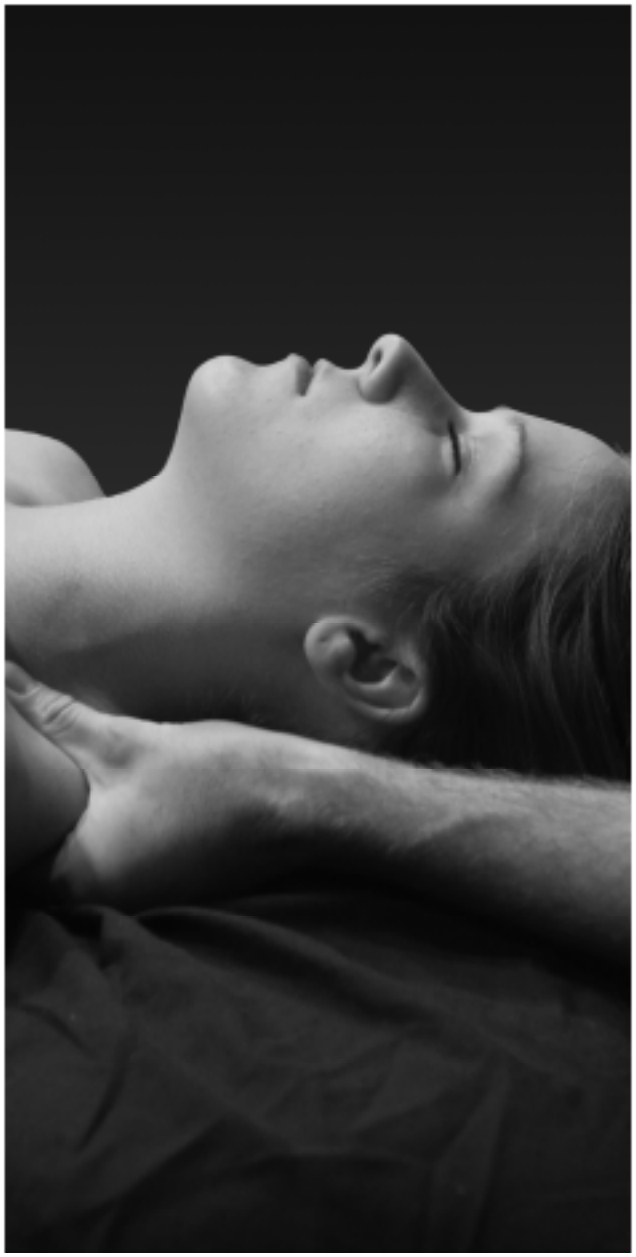
THE SOMA INSTITUTE

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF CLINICAL MASSAGE THERAPY



Catalog & Handbook
Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program
2026

Accreditation and Approvals

Certificate of Approval to Operate issued by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 333, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1377

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training
1722 N. Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

The Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency. 202.955.1113 (Telephone)

Soma graduates are qualified to apply for municipal and most state licensing and for certification by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards.

Soma is a school member of The American Massage Therapy Association.

The State of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs has granted a Certificate of Approval for the Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program.

The Soma Institute is owned by The National School of Clinical Massage Therapy Limited Partnership established in Ontario, Canada in 1998. The Limited Partner is Joan L. Hannant. The General and Managing Partner is HCKD & Associates Inc. whose President is Joan L. Hannant.

The Soma Institute . The National School of Clinical Massage Therapy
122 S. Michigan Avenue . Chicago . Illinois . 60603
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Catalog Accuracy

The information in this catalog was accurate at the time of publication, October, 2026. The School, however, reserves the right to change, without notice, any information appearing herein, including, but not limited to, admission standards and promotion and graduation requirements. Changes are subject to approval by the Superintendent, Illinois State Board of Education

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Welcome Letter from the Founder and President

What makes Soma so special? Our enthusiastic students, our dedicated faculty and staff, and our unique philosophy of education. It is a philosophy of education that emphasizes not only the memorization of data, but also critical thinking, development of excellent clinical skills, and dedication to professional behavior.

At Soma, we are committed to the notion of community. When you become part of ours, we will do everything we can to help you thrive in it.

The first lesson in massage therapy school is to pay attention to yourself: your thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes and needs. By caring for yourself, you are able to care for others.

We are here to ensure that you have the support you need to flourish intellectually and personally at Soma. The policies and procedures outlined herein are to help you navigate your time at Soma successfully. Please become familiar with them and be sure to ask questions about anything that is unclear

If there is any way that I can assist as you embark on this exciting new journey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Joan L. Hannant
Founder & President
joanhannant@soma.edu

School Information

A. Our Mission

At Soma our mission is to educate and inspire the next generation of clinical massage therapy professionals through rigorous academics and clinical excellence in a caring and supportive environment. We are dedicated to developing compassionate and skilled therapists who optimize the health and wellness of their clients and the communities they serve. Soma envisions a world where complementary medicine is accessible and integral to the health care system.

B. Core Values

Academic Excellence:

At Soma, we strive to commit to high academic standards that are up-to-date and demonstrably effective so that we prepare students with the knowledge and skills essential for a successful clinical massage therapy career.

Inclusion & Equity:

At Soma, we strive to prioritize diversity, equality, a sense of belonging, and an environment where all backgrounds can thrive. We believe that everyone should have a fair and equal chance at succeeding in the clinical massage therapy program, so we provide supports to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to achieve their professional aspirations regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.

Integrity & Ethics:

At Soma, we strive to operate with honesty, transparency, and accountability in academics and institutional governance at every stage of the student journey -- in advertising, admissions, financial aid, education and training, student services, career services, and continuing education.

Innovation:

At Soma we strive to understand and address educational challenges in an ever-changing world of health and wellness. We are committed to contributing to the way in which health care is defined and provided in America by promoting the positive impact of clinical massage therapy on the overall health and wellness of our communities.

Community Engagement:

At Soma we strive to foster community collaboration and applying clinical massage therapy skills to positively impact the world in which we live. Soma provides complementary massage therapy to our students and their guests, to Chicago Marathon participants, to community events such as the Susan B. Kamen Race for the Cure, and to NCAA Division I athletes at Loyola University Chicago.

C. History of the School

Over the years, The Soma Institute has achieved a number of significant milestones putting it at the forefront of clinical massage therapy. The Illinois State Board of Education approved the School for operation and enrollment of students in July 1998. The founder and President, Joan Hannant, assembled an accomplished administrative and faculty team that shared her commitment to and passion for setting a new standard of excellence in the field of clinical massage therapy education. The first classes were held in September 1998 and, in that same year, Soma became a member of the American Massage Therapy Association's Council of Schools. Additionally, graduates of the School became eligible to take the Certification Examination of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.

In 1999, the Clinical Massage Therapy program was approved by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Also in that year, Soma established clinical externships at Aids Alternative Health Partners and The Special Olympics.

In 2000, Soma was selected by the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon to be the exclusive provider for the corporate team challenge program.

In 2001, Soma's Program Director was invited to work with Olympic athletes at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.In 2002, the Clinical Massage Therapy program was approved by the Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs for GI Bill ® students (GI Bill ® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs [VA]. More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

Also in 2002, Soma established clinical massage therapy externships for the Chicago Style Gymnastics Meet – the largest women's gymnastics invitational meet in the world.

Soma's Program Director was invited to work with Olympic Athletes at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece.

In November 2004, the School received institutional eligibility to participate in Title IV Student Financial Assistance Programs.

In 2012, the Soma Institute and Loyola University's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics joined forces to create a satellite massage therapy clinic at Loyola University. At this unique externship, Soma students work alongside athletic trainers and team physicians to provide massage therapy to NCAA- Division I athletes.

In 2014, Soma was granted approval to offer a 110 clock hour Health and Wellness Coaching Certificate Program. The program trains students to develop their coaching skills so that they can work with individuals to help them establish goals, maintain motivation, and concentrate on their successes as they change and manage their lifestyle so that it embodies health and wellness.

In 2015, Soma launched its exclusive on-line job board allowing licensed graduates to apply for massage therapy positions directly through the website. That same year, Soma introduced its Lunchtime Lecture Series where owners, managers, and professionals in the field speak about their experiences and recommend actions for new graduates entering the massage therapy profession.

In 2021, Soma was granted approval by its accreditor, Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training, to offer the Health & Wellness Coaching certificate program exclusively on-line.

In 2022, Soma's Program Director, Michael Hovi was appointed to the Illinois State Massage Therapy Licensing Board and elected as the Chair of the Board.

In 2023, Soma introduced workshops in entrepreneurship for students and graduates who want to start their own massage therapy business.

In 2025, Soma students and graduate volunteers provided over 160 free sports massage treatments to runners at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon.

In 2026, Soma moved to its new location at 122 S. Michigan Avenue.

D. Location and Facilities

Soma is located in the heart of the academic and cultural corridor in downtown Chicago. This location is ideally suited to student life as it is a stimulating and culturally rich urban area boasting an array of cafés, restaurants, theaters, galleries and bookstores. The School is convenient to public transportation and parking facilities, and is a short walk from Lake Michigan, Millenium Park, Grant Park, National Louis University, the Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago. Detailed directions to Soma can be found at www.soma.edu.

The campus is comprised of classrooms, administrative offices, and break rooms. The equipment in the classrooms supports student education by making available the necessary educational tools. Massage tables with face rests and bolsters and massage chairs are provided for student training. Computerized presentation equipment, hydrotherapy equipment, white boards, smart boards, educational charts, model skeletons, massage lotions, table disinfectants and hand sanitizers are provided. The building in which the School is located is also wheelchair accessible.

E. Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program

Soma's 600 clock hour program which is offered both in day (38 weeks) and evening (49 weeks) schedules (see Catalog Schedule Supplement) adheres to high academic standards and exceeds municipal and most state licensing requirements. Graduates receive a diploma in Clinical Massage Therapy.

A Clinical Massage Therapy diploma from Soma prepares students to be employed as massage therapists providing massage treatments in spas, salons, health and fitness clubs, resorts, medical and chiropractic offices, in hospitals and in sports massage for amateur and professional teams and athletes. Many graduates also choose to pursue self-employment by establishing private practices.

The maximum lecture class size is 54. In laboratory classes, the student-faculty ratio is 18:1. Schedule information is issued as a supplement to the catalog.

The program's curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis. Student input into the review is obtained through confidential surveys conducted at the end of every course. Ad hoc surveys are also conducted with employers and faculty members.

F. Program Overview, Courses and Disclosures

During the course of the program, students will participate in both didactic (classroom) and clinical (hands-on) educational experiences. Success in both areas is vital to the student's education and professional development as a clinical massage therapist. Students are taught the theory and techniques of massage therapy in both the classroom and laboratory. Students then take this knowledge and apply it during their clinical rotations under the supervision of faculty members.

Course Descriptions

Clinical Anatomy 1 (ANAT1)

This course provides an overview of the basic tissues that compose the body as well as the integumentary, nervous, and endocrine systems as they relate to the practice of clinical massage therapy. *(16 clock hours, all lecture)*

Clinical Anatomy 2 (ANAT2)

This course provides an overview of the cardiovascular, lymphatic, digestive, urinary, respiratory and reproductive systems as they relate to the practice of clinical massage therapy. *(16 clock hours, all lecture)*

Clinical Education 1 (CLED1) - Competency Clinic

In this course, students apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in the didactic and clinical courses and demonstrate their ability to perform the common set of clinical skills required of an entry-level massage therapist in a competency clinic. Attendance is required at the time of the competency clinic test. *(16 clock hours, all lab)*

Clinical Education 2 (CLED2) - Clinic Orientation

This course prepares students to work with the public in a faculty-supervised clinical environment by making sure students are familiar with the policies and procedures relevant to Teaching Clinic and Externship sites. Documenting treatment protocols, developing a treatment plan and communicating professionally with clients, medical personnel and colleagues will be reviewed. *(12 clock hours, 6 lab & 6 lecture)*

Clinical Education 3 (CLED3) – Supervised Clinic

Clinical Education gives students the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes as they work with the public in a faculty-supervised clinical environment. Through a clinical affiliation agreement established with Loyola University's Norville Center for Intercollege Athletics, students interact with student athletes and medical teams under faculty supervision. Students also provide massage therapy to the public in such special events as the Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure and wellness fairs at National Louis University. *(48 clock hours, all internship/externship hours).*

Clinical Integration 1 (CLIN1)

This course introduces client intake forms, client history documentation and posture analysis. *(10 clock hours, 5 lab & 5 lecture)*

Clinical Integration 2 (CLIN2)

This course introduces cervical joint range of motion and orthopedic tests related to the practice of clinical massage therapy. Students study the clinical significance of palpatory findings. *(16 clock hours, 10 lab & 6 lecture)*

Clinical Integration 3 (CLIN3)

This course introduces joint range of motion, palpatory findings and orthopedic tests for the upper extremity and lumbosacral spine, related to the practice of clinical massage therapy. *(16 clock hours, 10 lab & 6 lecture)*

Clinical Integration 4 (CLIN4)

This course introduces joint range of motion, palpatory findings and orthopedic tests for the hip & knee, related to the practice of clinical massage therapy. *(16 clock hours, 10 lab & 6 lecture)*

Clinical Massage Techniques and Protocols (CMTP)

Building on the skills learned in Clinical Massage Therapy 1, this course introduces trigger point therapy, fascial techniques, lymphatic drainage, neuromuscular techniques, sports massage techniques and the general protocol that guides clinical massage therapy treatments. The principles and applications of therapeutic hydrotherapy and thermotherapy modalities are also introduced. Students apply thermal agents commonly used in a clinical setting and observe their physiological effects on the human body. *(48 clock hours, 34 lab & 14 lecture)*

Clinical Massage Therapy 1 (CMT1)

This course introduces the principles of Swedish massage therapy. Professional standards and techniques of therapeutic communication, draping, client positioning, health, hygiene and body mechanics are demonstrated and practiced. In addition, the anatomical and physiological effects of massage are examined, together with the indications, precautions, and contraindications for particular massage therapy techniques. *(72 clock hours, 52 lab & 20 lecture)*

Clinical Massage Therapy 2 (CMT2)

Building on the skills learned in Clinical Massage Therapy 1 and Clinical Massage Techniques & Protocols, this course introduces clinical massage therapy treatment indications, precautions, and contraindications for pathologies of the cervical region. *(16 clock hours, 10 lab & 6 lecture)*

Clinical Massage Therapy 3 (CMT3)

This course focuses on specific-soft tissue pathologies of the upper extremity, the trunk, and postural distortion. Specific massage therapy techniques are refined and incorporated into the general protocols for each condition. Students learn to recognize specific pathologies, develop treatment goals, and implement a massage therapy treatment plan. *(40 clock hours, 30 lab & 10 lecture)*

Clinical Massage Therapy 4 (CMT4)

This course focuses on specific-soft tissue pathologies of the lower extremity. Specific massage therapy techniques are refined and incorporated into the general protocols for each condition. Students learn to recognize specific pathologies, develop treatment goals, and implement a massage therapy treatment plan. *(24 clock hours, 18 lab & 6 lecture)*

Kinesiology 1 (KIN1)

This course introduces students to the principles of movement. The relationship between the anatomy and the kinesiology of joints and muscles is studied, as are complications, precautions and contraindications when applying basic therapeutic movement protocols. The muscles of the upper extremity and trunk will be presented in this class. *(24 clock hours, 18 lab & 6 lecture)*

Kinesiology 2 (KIN2)

This course builds on skills from Kinesiology 1. The relationship between the anatomy and the kinesiology of joints and muscles is studied, as are complications, precautions and contraindications when applying basic therapeutic movement protocols. The muscles of the lower extremity will be presented in this class. *(16 clock hours, 12 lab & 4 lecture)*

Musculoskeletal Anatomy 1 (MSA1)

This course provides a detailed overview of muscles of the upper body and the skeletal and articular systems as they relate to the practice of clinical massage therapy. There is a strong emphasis on precise palpation of muscles, tendons, bones, and ligaments in order to locate and assess tissues of the human body. *(30 clock hours, 20 lab & 10 lecture)*

Musculoskeletal Anatomy 2 (MSA2)

This course provides a detailed overview of muscles of the trunk as they relate to the practice of clinical massage therapy. There is a strong emphasis on precise palpation of muscles, tendons, bones, and ligaments in order to locate and assess tissues of the human body. *(30 clock hours, 20 lab & 10 lecture)*

Musculoskeletal Anatomy 3 (MSA3)

This course provides a detailed overview of muscles of the lower body as they relate to the practice of clinical massage therapy. There is a strong emphasis on precise palpation of muscles, tendons, bones, and ligaments in order to locate and assess tissues of the human body. *(20 clock hours, 12 lab & 8 lecture)*

Pathology 1 (PATH1)

In this course students are taught to identify etiology, signs and symptoms, as well as massage indications and contraindications for various commonly occurring pathological conditions relating to the integumentary, skeletal and cardiovascular systems. This course also includes a brief description of basic CPR/First Aid concepts. *(24 clock hours, all lecture)*

Pathology 2 (PATH2)

In this course students are taught to identify etiology, signs and symptoms, as well as massage indications and contraindications for various commonly occurring pathological conditions relating to the endocrine, immune, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive and reproductive systems. *(16 clock hours, all lecture)*

Physiology 1 (PHYS1)

This course introduces students to the basic processes that underlie the functions of the major anatomical systems of the human body such as cell structure, integumentary, skeletal, muscular, and nervous systems so that the clinical massage therapist understands the effects of specific massage treatments and is able to determine the most effective techniques. *(16 clock hours, all lecture)*

Physiology 2 (PHYS2)

This course introduces students to the basic processes that underlie the functions of the major anatomical systems of the human body, such as the endocrine, lymphatic, digestive and respiratory systems so that the clinical massage therapist understands the effects of specific massage treatments and is able to determine the most effective techniques. *(32 clock hours, all lecture)*

Professional Development 1(PROD1)

This course focuses on the professional development of massage therapists and the issues affecting contemporary massage therapy practice. Key ethical issues, including scope of practice, informed consent, confidentiality, boundaries, and dual relationships are also introduced. *(10 clock hours, all lecture)*

Professional Development 2 (PROD2)

This course examines the fundamentals of starting a successful clinical massage therapy career. Students are introduced to a variety of career development topics including: resume writing, interviewing, basic marketing, state licensure, professional insurance and credentialing requirements. A final written comprehensive examination offers preparation for the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLEX) from the FSMTB. *(16 clock hours, all lecture)*

Disclosures

Statement of Data required by the *Private Business and Vocational Schools Act* (2012 Section1095.240 Disclosures)

Reporting Period July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 – CMT Program Outcomes	Number/Per Cent
Number of students enrolled in Clinical Massage Therapy Program (179 Students Enrolled at 7/1/24 **PLUS 178** New Starts, 23 Re-enrollments, & 0 Transfers In through 6/30/2025)	380
Withdrawal rate = Percentage of enrolled students not completing course of instruction during reporting period - (Withdrawals 75 & 0 Transfers Out/380 enrollments)	19.7%
Completion/Graduation Rate = Number of students who Completed or Graduated in the Reporting Period (171) divided by Number of Students Scheduled to Complete/Graduate in the Period (204)	83.8%
Number of graduates available for placement assistance by the school (171 graduates less 35 not available for placement due to personal reasons)	136
Percentage of Graduates available for Placement who were placed in a related field (0), outside the field (0), in the field (27 through Placement Assistance plus 80 self-placed) = 107/136; not employed (30).	78.7%
Percentage of students who Passed the State Licensing Examination/Professional Certification (91) out of 132 who took exam (91/132) in the reporting period	68.9%
Average starting salary for all graduates employed as employees, independent contractors, and in private practice	$40/hour

G. Student Services

At Soma, we care about your success. We offer the following services designed to help you succeed and achieve your dream of becoming a clinical massage therapist.

Tutoring and Test Prep Help

Private and Group Tutoring is available to all students every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 12:30pm to 6:30pm. Review before a test, practice a technique, or clarify a lecture. No appointment is necessary and its FREE!

Food Pantry: Free Groceries!

To ensure everyone has access to fresh nutritious food, Soma students may participate in National Louis University's Fresh Market. Fresh produce, meats, dairy, eggs, juices, canned and packaged breakfast and dinner items, baked goods, non-perishable staples and personal hygiene items are available. The market is located at 122 S. Michigan Avenue on the 6th floor. No questions asked and entirely free!

Skylight Café and The Daily Grind Cafes

Explore National Louis University's café dining options with fresh, convenient and affordable meals and hot and cold coffee and tea beverages. The Skylight Café is located at 18 S. Michigan Avenue on the 12th floor and The Daily Grind Cafes are located at both 122 S. Michigan Avenue and 18 S. Michigan Avenue.

YouTube Tutorial Videos

Soma has created a variety of instructional videos. For details and to view the channel visit www.soma.edu.

Computer Lab

Soma students are welcome to use the Computer Lab located at 18 S. Michigan Avenue on the 5th floor.

Free Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available to students free of charge. No password is required.

Student Lounges

Soma students are welcome to make use of the many student lounges located at both 18 S. Michigan Avenue and 122 S. Michigan Avenue. Please be mindful of the rules pertaining to each student lounge.

Counseling Referrals

The Helpline at NAMI Chicago connects individuals and families with the right resources for mental health support. Dial 833-NAMI-CHI to connect to a live clinician for referrals, guidance, and expertise.

Course Evaluations

Student evaluations are conducted at the end of each course. They represent students' ratings of the courses and their instructors. The surveys are anonymous and are not returned to the instructors until grades for each course have been released. Student surveys are taken very seriously and curricular and policy changes are frequently based on student feedback. The student voice at Soma is powerful and is listened to.

Course Audits

Students may register to audit any non-clinical education course which they have successfully completed. The audit is for review and reinforcement of areas they are already knowledgeable in. Student auditors are not permitted to take any tests or examinations. They do not receive academic or attendance credit. Lab classes are subject to space availability. No tuition or fees are charged for student course audits.

Verifications Made to Outside Agencies

(i) Verification of Enrollment
Students needing verification or confirmation of their enrollment status with the School for health insurance, student loan deferment, or day care purposes may request that verification be sent by the Financial Aid Office after the first 15 calendar days of their program schedule.

Please note that enrollment can only be verified if the student completes and signs a Student Authorization for Release of Information form. Please allow ten (10) business days to process any requests. There is no charge for an enrollment verification.

(ii) Verification of Good Standing
A student is considered to be in good standing while enrolled at The Soma Institute. That standing is not normally terminated until the student completes their diploma, withdraws from the School, or is separated for academic, attendance, disciplinary, or financial reasons.

If the student is on probation or disciplinary action has been taken which does not, however, separate them from the School, the student is still considered to be in good standing for the purpose of verifying enrollment to a third party.
It should be noted that "in good standing" does not necessarily mean the student is making satisfactory academic progress. Good standing does not exclude the possibility that the student can be terminated if their performance does not improve.

Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation ceremonies are normally held once per year. Caps and gowns are provided by Soma at no additional charge and must be worn at the graduation ceremony.

Students who have not met all the graduation requirements outlined on page 27, including the payment of all tuition fees and any incidental administrative charges due to the school or registered any balance due on a TuitionFlex® plan, are not eligible for graduation and therefore will not be able to walk with their class.

H. Career Development

Building a successful career is a process that requires careful planning and strategic action. Soma offers a comprehensive career counseling program and job referral system designed to help students reach their career goals. The Soma Institute cannot, however, make any guarantee with regard to placement. There is no fee for career services. Soma's Career Services Office actively assists our graduates by:

- maintaining an online listing of job opportunities
- identifying career goals and preferences
- developing effective job search methods
- critiquing and proofreading resumés
- offering interview coaching and feedback
- assisting with local, state and nation-wide regulations and licensing
- Graduates, may also elect to audit courses in the Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma program. There is a $25 registration fee for each audited course.

Illinois State Licensing

The State of Illinois requires that persons engaged in massage for compensation must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations (IDFPR). In order to be licensed in the State of Illinois, graduates must pass the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination conducted by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) and then make an application to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Cost of an initial application, including fingerprinting costs, are included in tuition fees (see tuition & fees).

If a student fails the initial Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEX), all costs for retakes will be incurred by the student. Students will not be able to proceed with the licensing process until they pass the MBLEX. (Please see the FSMTB Candidate Handbook for Fail Policy: www.fsmtb.org).

Admissions Information

Requirements

Those considering massage therapy as a profession should be of good character and display sufficient motivation and commitment to succeed in a program aimed at producing clinical massage therapy professionals.

Massage therapists must demonstrate a high degree of functionality in many areas, such as:

- physical stamina and fine motor coordination;
- good communication and interpersonal skills;
- trustworthiness and professionalism.

Candidates for the Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program must:

1. be at least 18 years of age; and,
2. provide documented proof of high school graduation or its equivalency; i.e., a copy of a high school diploma or a GED, or a high school transcript, and/or written certification by a cognizant authority for home- schooled students. A student attestation of high school graduation, which identifies the name of the secondary school, location, and date of graduation, may be provided as proof of high school graduation only on a limited, exceptional basis (e.g., high school is closed).

Felony Conviction and Admissions

The Soma Institute reserves the right to deny admission to an applicant who has been convicted of any felony. Failure to fully disclose all misdemeanors and felony convictions as required by The Soma Institute application for admission constitutes grounds for the denial of admission. Note: Clinical Education externships may require criminal background checks and drug screening.

Misdeamors, Felonies and State Licensing

Applicants should note that in determining good moral character, the IDFPR may take into consideration conviction of any crime under the laws of the United States or any state or territory thereof that is a felony or a misdemeanor or any crime that is directly related to the practice of the massage therapy profession. Such a conviction shall not operate automatically as a complete bar to a license, except in the case of any conviction for prostitution, rape, or sexual misconduct or where the applicant is a registered sex offender.

Non-discrimination

We welcome applications from all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, or physical or mental handicap unrelated to ability. The School does not discriminate on any of these grounds in any of its school-administered programs.

The Application Process

Prospective students can obtain an application by contacting Soma or by visiting our website at www.soma.edu. Completed applications are accepted throughout the year and may be mailed, faxed, emailed or delivered.

If applicable, the School can assist students in obtaining official documents to support their application (e.g., high school transcripts, GED certificate, etc.).

The applicant will be asked to complete an interview with an admissions representative.

The applicant is given a copy of the catalog and any supplements at the time of the enrollment interview. These documents contain consumer information including tuition and fees, current schedule of program start dates, and a list of faculty. The information is reviewed with the enrolling student.

Transfer of Credit to The Soma Institute

If the Soma Institute determines, through a review of educational records (transcripts, catalog, syllabi or course outlines), that an applicant has had adequate previous education and attained at least a 70 percent grade in one or more of Clinical Massage Therapy 1 (72 clock hours), Clinical Anatomy 1 (16 clock hours), Clinical Anatomy 2 (16 clock hours), Physiology 1 (16 clock hours), Physiology 2 (32 clock hours), Kinesiology 1 (24 clock hours), Kinesiology 2 (16 clock hours) for a maximum of 192 clock hours completed at an institution or in a program accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the applicant may apply in writing to the Program Director to write an equivalency examination. Requests will not be accepted once the program has commenced.

There will be a $50 fee for each equivalency examination. The grading will be done on a pass/fail basis. If the applicant passes the examination(s), a grade of TC (Transfer of Credit) for the course(s) will appear on any transcript issued to them by The Soma Institute.

The qualified applicant will be exempted from the course(s) and the tuition fees reduced accordingly. If the successful applicant has already filled out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the academic year with another institution and has received a copy of their Student Aid Report (SAR), they would simply ask the School to obtain a copy of the Institutional Student Information Report, commonly referred to as an ISIR. There may, however, be additional paperwork and financial aid applications required. The student should arrange a meeting with the Financial Aid Office to discuss their particular requirements

If the applicant fails the examination, they may appeal in writing to the President within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the results. The President will provide a decision in writing to the applicant within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the appeal.

Transcripts of Veterans who have had a previous post secondary education, prior to training at the Soma Institute, will be reviewed. The Soma Institute will determine whether credit can be given for previous training at another institution. Failure of a veteran to provide transcripts for evaluation of transfer credit may result in the loss of VA Educational Benefits. If a Veteran is awarded credit for previous training at another institution, a grade of TC (Transfer Credit) for the course(s) will appear on any transcript issued to them by The Soma Institute.

Students who are awarded a grade of TC (Transfer of Credit) will be exempted from the course(s) and the tuition fees reduced accordingly. These students must also arrange a meeting with the Financial Aid Office to make appropriate adjustments, if necessary, to their financial aid package as a result of being awarded a TC.

Transfer of Credit from The Soma Institute

For students or alumni who may wish to apply for credit at another institution, Student Services or Career Services will assist with the provision of course syllabi and, for graduates, the provision of official transcripts which are not released until the program is completed Applicants for transfer of credit to another institution should be aware that it is completely at the discretion of the other institution whether to accept credits from The Soma Institute.

Readmission

Students who have withdrawn from The Soma Institute may apply for readmission at any time for transfer or reentry, except for students who have been dismissed. Students dismissed must wait six months to reapply. In both cases, readmitted students will be subject to all fees, policies, and standards in effect at the time of reapplication.

If students applying for readmission will not exceed maximum time frame (see Satisfactory Academic Progress) and can demonstrate a change in their circumstances which would favor successful completion of the program, then they will be readmitted and, if they were not making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) at the time of withdrawal or transfer, will be placed on a special probationary status for 90 calendar days. During that time, their files will be reviewed monthly to ensure their attendance is 85 percent in each course and their grade average is 70 percent in each course (see Satisfactory Academic Progress). If the readmitted student is not meeting either or both of the attendance/grade requirements while on probation, that is, if they fail a course for attendance and/or grades, they will be immediately and permanently terminated from The Soma Institute by written notice with right of appeal.

Eligibility for financial aid may be reinstated immediately for readmitted students who were meeting SAP at the time of withdrawal or transfer. All others must comply with the standards for academic progress at the end of the probationary period before eligibility may be reinstated.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Soma Institute is committed to providing appropriate services to students with documented learning, physical, and other disabilities. Disabled students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities available to help them in order to achieve their educational goals. The Soma Institute does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in either admission or access to programs and activities.

(a) Procedure for Requesting Accommodations

1. Students accepted to The Soma Institute should notify the Admissions Representatives requesting accommodations.
2. Appropriate supporting documentation, following precedent established by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, should be an original letter from an appropriate professional who is licensed to evaluate the disability consistent with the provisions of the ADA (i.e. physician, psychologist, or educator). The letter, which cannot be in fax or photocopy form, must be on the healthcare professional's letterhead and include the professional's title, address, and telephone number. The letter must also include a diagnosis of the disabling condition, and explain why special learning accommodations are necessary. The letter must have an original signature from the professional and be dated no more than 3 years prior to application.
3. It is important to note that students must identify themselves as needing accommodations and initiate this process directly with their Admissions Representatives or school officials. Independent arrangements cannot be made with faculty members.
4. In consultation with the President, accommodations are approved, denied, or modified from their original request.
5. The President informs the student of their approved accommodations.

(b) Confidentiality

All student records concerning disabilities are maintained separately from academic records. All information is treated as confidential and disclosure is limited to individuals who have a legitimate need to know. Student Records will notify the instructor or appropriate staff in writing of any accommodations to be granted. This is most often accomplished through e-mail. The nature of the disability will not be disclosed, unless there is a compelling need to share this information in order to provide appropriate accommodations.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Enrollment takes place by appointment throughout the year. The total tuition fee for students enrolled in either the day or the evening program schedule is $14,315.00 Deposits or down payments, which may be made by personal check, money order, cashier's check or credit card, become part of the tuition.

The tuition fee includes the cost of lotions, student professional liability insurance, and initial massage therapy licensure in the State of Illinois. The licensing costs covered are the fee for one sitting of the The Massage and Body Work Licensing Examination (MBLEX), the cost of one finger-printing, and the Illinois State licensing fee.

Students can anticipate spending approximately $359 on scrub top and pants, books, linens, and supplies not provided by the School. Purchase of a massage table is not required to participate in the program.

Students will either pay tuition in full or register any outstanding balance due, after application of Federal Financial Aid and other funding resources, through Education Loan Services, Inc. Tuition Flex® Payment Plans. For details on this affordable payment plan, contact the Financial Aid Office.

Tuition and Repeated Courses

Tuition will be charged for repeated courses. The tuition charge will be calculated based on the student's original tuition charge, divided by the program clock hours and then multiplied by the clock hours in the repeated course. This will be added to the total tuition charges for the student.

Financial Aid & Assistance

The Soma Institute maintains a Financial Aid Office. Individual tuition financing plans are specifically tailored to meet the needs of the applicant. The Financial Aid Office assists students in the completion of all documents applicable to various federal, state, local, and private sources of student financial aid.

Federal Financial Aid and other funding resources through Soma's Financial Aid Office can simplify the complex world of loan deferment, forbearance, consolidation, etc., and will, with the permission of the student, complete and submit the application to the U.S. Department of Education. Soma's Financial Aid Office will be the liaison communicating with loan servicers and the U.S. Department of Education. The following is a description of the types of financial aid programs currently offered by the School.

(a) Federal Financial Aid

The Soma Institute has been approved by the United States Department of Education for the following programs for financial assistance. The programs listed below are available to eligible students to help meet the cost of their education.

i. The Pell Grant Program: This federal grant is awarded to eligible undergraduate students who have not yet earned a Bachelor's degree. The grant does not have to be repaid.

ii. Direct Loan (DL) Programs: The U.S. government provides federally guaranteed funds to students who meet the minimum half-time enrollment status as defined by the United States Department of Education. The programs that are available are:

   a. Stafford Loan (Subsidized) – a low interest loan which is awarded on the basis of financial need. No interest is charged to the student on these loans while they are in attendance at least half-time and for 6 months after they stop attending at least half time.

   b. Stafford Loan (Unsubsidized) – not a need-based loan and interest is charged from the date the loan is disbursed.

   c. PLUS Loan is a Parent Loan for dependent undergraduate students.

Federal Financial Aid Application Process:

After prospective students complete the interview and admissions procedures, they begin the financial aid process. A financial aid advisor assists students in completing all the necessary paperwork to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid. Students submit their income and other pertinent information and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with assistance from their Financial Aid Advisor. The FAFSA is signed by the student, or parent, if applicable, and sent to the Federal Central Processor for processing. The School receives an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) electronically from the U.S. Department of Education based upon the FAFSA submitted. The School then awards Financial Aid based upon this ISIR.

Federal Financial Aid Eligibility

In order to be eligible for federal financial aid, a student must be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen. The following documents are required as proof for an eligible non-citizen: an Alien Registration ("Green") Card, an I-94 with refugee, asylum or parolee status, or an I-551 stamped on the student's passport. The student also must be enrolled as a regular student in an eligible program pursuing a certificate of completion, attends regularly, and maintains satisfactory academic progress.

(b) The Soma Institute Payment Plan

For details on this affordable payment plan, contact the Financial Aid Office.

(c) Veterans Administration Educational Benefits

The State of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs has granted a Certificate of Approval for the Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program. Contact the Financial Aid Office for details.

VA Pending Payment Compliance: Beginning August 1, 2019 and despite any policy to the contrary, the Soma Institute – The National School of Clinical Massage Therapy will not take any of the four following actions toward any student using U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Post 9/11 G.I. Bill ® (Ch. 33) or Vocational and Rehabilitation and Employment (Ch. 31) benefits, while their payment from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is pending to the educational institution:

- Prevent their enrollment;
- Assess a late penalty fee to;
- Require they secure alternative or additional funding;
- Deny their access to any resources (access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities) available to other students who have satisfied their tuition and fee bills to the institution.

However, to qualify for this provision, such students may be required to:

- Produce the VA's Certificate of Eligibility by the first day of class;
- Provide written request to be certified;
- Provide additional information to properly certify the enrollment as described in other institutional policies (See our VA school Certifying official for all requirements)

(d) Americorps Vouchers

Soma accepts Americorps vouchers. Contact the Financial Aid Office for details

(e) Vocational Rehabilitation, Trade Act (TA)

The Soma Institute accepts funds from Vocational Rehabilitation and the Trade Act Program. Contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

(f) The Soma Program Completion Tuition Grant

The Soma Institute will award up to $2,100 to Clinical Massage Therapy diploma candidates who successfully complete the program. The award will appear as a credit on the student's tuition account ledger and is not transferable and has no redeemable cash value.

(g) Past Due Debt Policy:

Where a current or former student has had an official transcript withheld prior to July 1, 2023 because of a debt owed to the school, they may apply in writing for release of the transcript.

Any complaints with regard to the administration of the past due debt policy may be made to the Illinois Attorney General's student loan ombudsman (1-800-455-2456, StudentLoans@ilag.gov.) and/or to the V-P, Financial Aid (312-878-4638, FinancialAid@soma.edu).

(h) Readmission and Financial Credit

Students who are readmitted to the program will receive credit for all payments received during their previous enrollment period(s). Upon successfully completing the 15 day trial period in their re-admitted program, all debt previously owed to the school by the student will be forgiven.

School Policies

A. Operational Policies

Building Access and Security

The building in which The Soma Institute is located provides 24 hour security. Students are issued photo identification cards which they must be prepared to present to security.

Building security may prohibit students from entering the building who do not comply with security regulations. Students are asked to be courteous and cooperative with building security, as they are here for your safety.

Campus Security Policy

Under the requirements of federal law (The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act of 1990), as of October 1 each year, all current students, faculty, and staff are given a brochure presenting the School's updated Safety and Security Policy and Annual Crime Statistics Report on crimes reported to the School that occur on campus and on public property within or immediately adjacent to or accessible from the campus (i.e. building stairwells, lobby, hallways). Additionally, The Soma Institute, in accordance with federal mandates, provides Title IX and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) training to all incoming students during their Professional Development 1 course. Any interested parties may obtain a copy of the report at the School's Financial Aid Office or from Student Services.

(a) Campus Security Authority

The Vice-President, Operations & Financial Aid has been designated as the Primary Campus Security Authority. The Secondary Authority is the Student Records Director.

(b) Reporting Criminal Activity and Emergencies

Students and employees are encouraged to report in a timely manner all criminal activity and emergencies that occur at the School, as follows:

- Emergencies - requiring the response of fire, police, and/or medical assistance, first dial 9-1-1. Then contact a Campus Security Authority at 312.972.9197.
- Non-emergency criminal offense situation occurring on campus. Report the incident to a Campus Security Authority at 312.972.9197.

Copyright Infringement

Unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material, including unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing, may subject students to civil and criminal liabilities. These may include fines and/or imprisonment of a minimum of one year and a maximum of ten years depending on the violation.

Email Notification

Email is a valid mechanism for official communication with students at The Soma Institute. The School has the right to send official communications to students to the email address which the School has on file. The School has the right to expect that students will read email in a timely fashion. When necessary, the email will be password protected using the Student I.D. number. A student's failure to check their official email address will not be accepted as a valid excuse for missing a deadline or for failing to comply with a requirement.

Emergency Messages to Students

The Soma Institute does not transmit emergency messages to students. Students are advised to make suitable emergency contact arrangements.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

The Soma Institute maintains an emergency preparedness plan that can be accessed at www.soma.edu.

In Case of Fire

Students, faculty and staff should go to the closest stairwell identified by exit signs and proceed downstairs to the lobby exit. They should leave the building and await further instructions from the building security personnel.

Inclement Weather & Emergency Closing Policy

In general, Soma teaching activities are expected to continue during inclement weather. In the event of a severe storm or other emergency in which state or local officials advise against travel to the downtown core and/or when public transportation facilities are limited or not functioning, the President may elect to close the School in the interest of faculty, staff, and student safety. The School will send an email via a *soma.edu* email address if a decision has been made to close the School. Soma is obligated to reschedule any canceled classes.

Personal Belongings

The Soma Institute bears no responsibility for the loss or theft of or damage to personal property of students.

Photo Identification Cards

The School photo identification card for enrolled students should be carried at all times. The card is the property of The Soma Institute and is not transferable; its privileges may be canceled at any time if the card is misused. Students are required to surrender their card to School officials upon request. The student's ID number is encoded on the card and indicates whether the student is currently enrolled and if the card is valid. All students who withdraw from Soma must immediately surrender their Soma ID cards to the School. Immediately report a lost or stolen card to Student Services, at 312.878.4639. Cards may be replaced for a $20 fee. Found cards should be returned or mailed to The Soma Institute.

Smoking and Vaping

Smoking, of any kind, is strictly prohibited in any enclosed School facility and externship site (including but not limited to common work areas, classrooms, lunchrooms, private offices, hallways, stairways, and restrooms). This policy includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, E-Cigarettes, vaporizers, E-Liquids, or electronic nicotine delivery systems.

Visitors

Unfortunately, due to security and privacy regulations, visitors cannot be accommodated. If a student plans to meet someone who is not a student before or after school hours, that visitor should be directed to the building lobby.

Photo Release

All students give The Soma Institute the absolute right and permission to use photographic portraits, pictures, or videos of them in character or form for advertising, art trade, or any other useful purpose whatsoever.

B. Financial Policies

Delinquent Accounts

Students who are on a tuition payment plan and fall delinquent will be sent a written notice to bring the account current within 30 days from the notice date or be subject to dismissal from the program. If the student is delinquent at the final date of the program schedule but has successfully completed all coursework, the diploma will be withheld pending the account being brought current. Those students with delinquent tuition accounts will be eligible to receive unofficial transcripts only. In addition, alumni privileges will be withheld from any graduate whose tuition account falls delinquent.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Per Section 60 of The Private Business & Vocational Schools Act 2012 as administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, "[s]chools that are accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and approved to participate in offering Federal Title IV student financial aid may apply the required federal refund policy as long as the same policy is applied to all students even if they are not eligible for federal financial aid." For all students, therefore, The Soma Institute adheres to a refund policy which is in accordance with the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET). A copy of the Refund Policy is an integral part of the enrollment agreement.

General Requirement:

An institution must not obligate a student for more than twelve (12) months at a time. Refund computations must apply to the stated charges attributable to the given period of financial obligation, i.e. $14,315.00. The Clinical Massage Therapy Program day schedule is 9 months. The Clinical Massage Therapy Program evening-weekend schedule is 11 months.

Refund Due Dates:

1. If an applicant never attends class (no-show) or cancels the contract prior to the class start date, all refunds due will be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the first scheduled day of class or the date of cancellation, whichever is earlier.
2. For an enrolled student, the refund due will be calculated using the last date of attendance (LDA) and be paid within forty-five (45) calendar days from the documented date of determination (DOD). The date of determination is the date the student gives written or verbal notice of withdrawal to the institution or the date the institution terminates the student, by applying the institution's attendance, conduct, or Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. If a student provides advanced notice of withdrawal such that the 45-day window for refund processing ends before the last date of attendance, the refund must be paid within forty-five(45) calendar days from the last date of attendance.

Rejection and Cancellation Before the Start of Class:

1. If an applicant is rejected for enrollment by an institution, a full refund of all tuition monies paid will be made to the applicant.
2. If an institution cancels a program subsequent to a student's enrollment, the institution will refund all monies paid by the student.
3. If an applicant accepted by the institution cancels prior to the start of scheduled classes or never attends class (no-show), the institution will refund all monies paid.

Cancellation after the start of class (15 day student trial period):

The institution considers a withdrawal within the first 15 calendar days of the program schedule as a cancellation or no show. A student who is considered a cancellation or no show under such a policy will have all charges refunded and all payments returned to the individual or the applicable funding source.

Withdrawal or Termination After Start of Class and After the 15 day Trial Period:

The institution's refund policy is as follows:

a. Refund amounts are based on the number of scheduled clock hours completed as of the student's last date of attendance (LDA).

b. After the first 15 days and through fifty percent (50%) of the period of financial obligation, tuition charges retained will not exceed a pro rata portion of tuition for the training period completed, plus ten percent (10%) of the unearned tuition for the period of training that was not completed, up to a maximum of $1000.00.

c. After fifty percent (50%) of the period of financial obligation is completed, the institution may retain the full tuition.

Return of Title IV Funds Policy

Students who receive financial assistance from Title IV programs (Federal Pell Grant, Stafford loans, PLUS loans) and withdraw from school are subject to the Return of Title IV Funds requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

(a) Procedure for Return of Title IV Funds

i. Determine the percentage of the payment period the student completed. To determine the percentage, the total number of clock hours comprising the payment period for which assistance is awarded (i.e., 300 hours) is divided into the number of clock hours, scheduled to be completed in that period as of the day the student withdrew. The total number of clock hours in the payment period does not include any hours in which the student was on an approved leave of absence.

ii. Determine the amount of aid earned by the student. The amount of aid the student earned for the payment period is determined by multiplying the percentage derived from Step 1 by the total amount of Title IV aid that was disbursed or that could have been disbursed as of the student's last date of attendance (see Post Withdrawal Disbursements Policy). After the 60 percent point in the payment period, a student is deemed to have earned 100 percent of the Federal Student Aid funds awarded for the period.

iii. Compare the amount earned to the amount disbursed. If less aid was disbursed than was earned, the student may receive a post withdrawal disbursement for the difference. If more aid was disbursed than was earned, the difference is refunded back to Title IV programs.

iv. Allocate responsibility for returning unearned aid between the School and the student. Students who receive living expenses are responsible for repayment of any unearned aid. If the student share of the unearned funds that must be returned is attributable to a Title IV loan program, then repayment will still be based on the terms and conditions of the promissory note. If the student share of the unearned funds that must be returned is attributable to a Title IV grant program, the initial amount to return will be reduced by 50 per cent.

v. Distribute the unearned aid back to the Title IV programs following the Refund Timeline and Refund Allocation policy.

vi. If a credit balance results from the R2T4 calculations, it will be disbursed as soon as possible but no later than 14 days after the calculation of the R2T4.

Note: These calculations may result in the student owing the school money based on the ACCET Refund Policy described above.

(b) Refund Timeline and Refund Allocation

The school will make refunds within 45 calendar days of the date the student officially withdraws, or the date the school determines that the student has unofficially withdrawn. An official withdrawal will be the date the student gives written or oral notice. For constructive (unofficial) withdrawals, if a student is not in attendance for 14 calendar days, the 14th day of absence will be used as the date of determination.

Refunds will be returned in the following order:

4. Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans/Direct Stafford Loans
5. Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans/Direct Stafford Loans
6. Federal PLUS Loans/Direct PLUS Loans
7. Federal Pell Grant Program
8. Other Federal, State, private or institutional assistance
9. The student

(c) Post Withdrawal Disbursements

If a student was eligible to receive federal aid but for some reason did not receive it prior to withdrawing, that is aid that could have been disbursed and is considered a withdrawal disbursement. For Pell Grants, the School must have received a valid ISIR or SAR and verification must be complete. For Stafford loans, a first time first year student must have completed the first 30 days of attendance and the School must have certified the loan application. For PLUS loans, the loan must be certified prior to the student's last date of attendance.

The School must provide written notification of an offer for student/parent to receive any post-withdrawal disbursements within 30 days of the date of determination of withdrawal. The parent or student must respond within 14 days to request some or all of the funds, at which time the School must disburse the funds that were requested within 90 days of the determination date of withdrawal. If no response is received, no disbursement will be made. If a response to make the disbursement is received after the 14 days, the School may choose whether or not to make the disbursement. Borrowers will be notified in writing if no disbursement was made.

(d) Exit Interviews

All students who received federal loans are required to attend a mandatory exit interview. This interview is done one-on-one at the Federal Aid Office. A student who withdraws, takes a leave of absence, or graduates from Soma, is required to attend one of these interviews. During this interview the counselor will explain the student's rights and responsibilities. Each student will be required to complete forms stating address, next of kin, personal references, and other pertinent information needed for loan collections.

C. Academic Policies

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Soma Institute's Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program is 600 clock hours. While regular monthly reviews are done with a view to counseling students who may be experiencing difficulties in the program, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is formally evaluated once--at the midpoint (300 hours) of the program.

How Satisfactory Academic Progress is Measured

A student must be meeting all three requirements of the following to be considered as progressing satisfactorily.

1. Qualitatively: The grade average is reviewed per course to ensure that the student is meeting the minimum 70 percent grade average.
2. Quantitatively: The attendance rate is reviewed to ensure that the student is maintaining a cumulative attendance rate of at least 85 per cent of the scheduled clock hours.
3. Against Maximum Time frame: Overall progress is checked against a maximum time frame of 150 per cent of the program length, measured in weeks. For day students, the maximum time frame in which they may successfully complete the program is 57 weeks. For evening/weekend students, maximum time frame is 74 weeks. If it is determined that a student will exceed the maximum time frame, they will be administratively withdrawn without right of appeal. Application for re-entry may be made after six months.

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Incomplete Courses

Incomplete grades are not given.

Satisfactory Academic Progress and Failed Courses

Students must normally repeat any classes in which they earn less than a 70 percent grade average. Students must sign up for any repeat course no later than 15 calendar days from receipt of the final (official) F grade or be subject to dismissal with a right of appeal. Students who have more than one final (official) F grade at any time will be subject to dismissal with a right of appeal. The lowest grade will be dropped and the highest grade will be used to calculate the academic average. Course work repeated may adversely affect a student's academic progress in terms of the maximum time frame as the repeat course counts as attempted hours.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Warning

Students will be notified in writing when they are placed on warning. Students will also receive attendance or academic counseling from the President, or her designate, when they are placed on warning. The student's file will be reviewed again on the last scheduled class date. If the student achieves the SAP objectives of an 85 percent cumulative attendance rate and a 70 percent cumulative weighted grade average, the student will be removed from warning status. Should the student not achieve the SAP requirements, they will be notified in writing that they have been dismissed with the right of appeal.

Appeal of Academic Dismissal

The student may submit a written appeal of his/her dismissal within five calendar days of receipt of the dismissal notice. The appeal should be addressed to the School President. The appeal must be accompanied by documentation of the mitigating circumstances that have led to their dismissal and evidence that changes have occurred to allow the student to now meet standards of satisfactory academic progress.

Only extraordinary circumstances will be considered, such as death or severe illness in the immediate family. Before an appeal may be granted, a written academic plan must be provided to the student which clearly identifies a viable plan for the student to successfully complete the program within the maximum time frame allowed. The student will be sent the President's written decision within five days of receipt of the appeal. The decision is final. Students reinstated upon appeal are on a probationary status for the next term, during which time they must meet the terms and conditions set out in the President's letter granting the appeal.

Grades of Withdrawn Students

Students who withdraw or are dismissed from the program will receive a grade of zero percent in each class interrupted by the withdrawal or dismissal. All interrupted classes must be repeated should the student be readmitted to the institution.

Transfer and Readmitted Students

Transfer students from outside the institution will be evaluated qualitatively only on the work completed while at the Institute. The maximum time frame is reduced for transfer students, based upon the remaining length of the program in which they enroll. If the student transfers in 440 hours and therefore must complete 160 hours at the Institute (160/16 hours per week = 10 weeks), the maximum time frame is 10 weeks x 150% or 15 weeks.

Reinstatement of Financial Aid

A transfer or readmitted student's Title IV aid eligibility will be reinstated if the student regains satisfactory academic progress status by meeting the qualitative and quantitative requirements within 90 days of transfer or re-admittance.

Federal Financial Aid Disbursement Rules

For those students receiving Federal Financial Aid, 300 clock hours of scheduled class time marks the completion of Payment Period 1. Funds for Payment Period II cannot be disbursed, however, until the student, even if making SAP, has attended at least 90 percent or 270 clock hours and earned passing grades for courses totaling 300 clock hours.

Attendance Policy

The Soma Institute expects students to attend school every day and assumes that active and informed participation in class discussions and laboratories is essential to the development of intellectual and technical skills. Daily attendance records are maintained and regularly reviewed. Students must maintain a cumulative 85% monthly attendance average. The minimum acceptable attendance is an 85% attendance rate for completion/graduation.

Attendance is reviewed monthly and students who fail to maintain a minimum of 85% cumulative attendance will be placed on attendance probation for 60 days to provide an opportunity to achieve satisfactory attendance progress. Student progress toward achieving 85% is monitored monthly during the probationary period.

Students who achieve the cumulative 85% attendance in less than the probationary period may be removed early from attendance probation and returned to good attendance standing. If satisfactory attendance is not achieved at the conclusion of the 60 day probationary period, the student is subject to dismissal. The President may extend the probationary period if it can be documented that the student, with improved attendance, has the ability to achieve the cumulative 85% attendance requirement for graduation on or before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. If, at any time during the probation extension it is determined that the student will not achieve the 85% cumulative attendance requirement, the student will be terminated from the program.

The maximum number of consecutive absences that will result in students being withdrawn from the program is fourteen (14) calendar days.

Reporting an Absence

Students are expected to call Student Services at 312.939.2723 if they will not be in attendance, so the instructor can be advised. Reporting an absence, however, will not excuse that absence.

Attendance Reports

Each day instructors submit the class attendance records to Student Services where the data are recorded in the student's electronic records. The attendance rate information is contained in the Progress Report, which also includes final course grades. If a student does not agree with any of the attendance data, they may submit a written appeal on or before the last day of their program.

Tardiness and Early Departures

The Soma Institute expects students to be in class on time. Being late for or leaving early from class is disruptive to both teachers and students and diminishes the learning experience and the development of professional behaviors. Accordingly, being tardy and leaving early are documented by the instructor on the daily attendance sheets. Tardiness is defined as arriving one or more minutes after the scheduled start time. Early Departure is defined as leaving the class prior to the scheduled dismissal time. In a clock hour program every instructional minute is counted. There are no grace periods.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is a temporary break in a student's attendance during which she or he is considered to be continuously enrolled. Such a leave must comply with the following requirements:

i. A student must request the leave of absence in writing. Forms are available from Student Services. The request must be made in advance of the beginning date of the leave of absence, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. Retroactive leaves are only granted in case of extreme emergencies.

ii. The leave of absence is limited to 180 days per 12-month period, or one-half the published program length, whichever is shorter.

iii. The student must sign and date the leave of absence request, specify a reason for the leave, and provide supporting documentation.

iv. The student must attest to understanding the procedures and implications for returning to their course of study.

v. A student must contact Student Services to advise of their return to class and to set an appointment to determine what, if any, coursework needs to be made up and to complete a make-up schedule.

Jury Duty

The need to attend school is not a permissible excuse from jury duty. A student may apply for a Leave of Absence in the case of jury duty. In the State of Illinois, a prospective juror may be excused if he/she:

1. Has a physical or mental disability that would prevent him/her from serving. The prospective juror will be required to provide a doctor's note verifying the disability.
2. Must provide actual and necessary care for another and alternate arrangements are not feasible.
3. Is unable to read or understand the English language.

Grading and Evaluation System

Students receive a syllabus in each course which states the basis of evaluation for the course. The passing grade for the complete course of study and for each course is 70 per cent.

The grading system is as follows:

A = 90 – 100%	I = Incomplete
B = 80 – 89%	W = Withdrawn
C = 70 – 79%	P/F = Pass/Fail (not calculated in GPA)
F = below 70%	T/C = Transfer of Credit

(a) Grade of Withdrawal

Withdrawn courses will count toward attempted hours but not earned credits. The withdrawal is part of a student's permanent record.

(b) Grade Appeals

Any student may appeal a grade by the following procedure:

Step 1: Meet with the instructor who rendered the grade decision within seven (7) calendar days of the release of the grade. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student may proceed to Step 2 within seven (7) calendar days immediately following the meeting with the instructor.

Step 2: Submit the appeal in writing to the Program Director or, in the case of a conflict, to Student Services for assignment to a designated faculty member. The appeal should include copies of materials supporting the appeal (tests, transcripts, etc.). A written response will be issued within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the appeal. If the response is considered unsatisfactory, the student may proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: The written appeal may be submitted to the School President within five (5) school business days of receiving the Step 2 response. The School President will provide a written response within seven (7) calendar days. This decision is final.

(c) Final Grade Appeals

The written appeal may be submitted to the School President. The School President will provide a written response. The decision is final.

(d) Make-up Policy

In-class Tests and Quizzes

In order to train students to work in the massage therapy industry, The Soma Institute expects students to conduct themselves in a professional manner. This means students must be in class and take tests and quizzes the day they are given. Any student who misses an in-class test or quiz, for any reason other than an approved leave of absence, will not normally be permitted to make the test up.

Make-up Policy

Missed Classes

Students, at the discretion of the Student Records Director, may be permitted to make up clock hours for absences only. Make up classes must be comparable to the content, time, and delivery of the classes missed.

(e) Failed Coursework

A student who fails a course will receive a grade of "F" and will normally be required to retake the course. Students must sign up for any repeat course no later than 15 calendar days from receipt of the final (official) F grade or be subject to dismissal with a right of appeal. Students who have more than one final (official) F grade at any time will be subject to dismissal with a right of appeal. The failure will be part of the student's permanent academic record. A new grade will be given for the repeated course. The "F" previously received will remain on the student's record but will not be calculated into the grade percentage.

A student who fails a course a second time may be allowed to retake the failed course again only if it is determined that the program can be completed within the maximum time frame allowed.

A student who fails a course a third time will not be allowed additional retakes and will be administratively withdrawn from the program. No course repetitions can exceed the maximum time frame for the program in which the student is enrolled (150% of program hours).

(f) Failed Coursework and Tuition

Students must pay for repeat courses (see tuition & fees).

(g) Grade Notification

Grades are available to students in the form of unofficial progress reports. In most cases, the process of scoring and notification takes seven (7) calendar days. Federal regulations outlined in the Buckley Amendment restrict the reporting of grades via telephone, fax, or email.

(h) President's Honor List

Students with outstanding records are named to the President's Honor List if they meet both of the following standards:

1. earned an overall weighted average of 90% or more; and
2. attended at least 90% of scheduled class hours

(i) Cohort Valedictorian

The cohort valedictorian is the graduate with the highest overall weighted average calculation and with attendance over 90% on the expected completion date for the class.

Withdrawal

Students wishing to withdraw from the program may do so at any time by giving notice, which may be in writing, to a School official of their intention to terminate enrollment. The date of withdrawal will be the date a verbal notice is received, the letter is postmarked, the facsimile, email, Facebook or Twitter transmission is received, or, if hand-delivered, the date the notice is delivered. Within 15 calendar days of the date of withdrawal, a written acknowledgment will be mailed out. Any refund due will be issued within 45 calendar days of the notice of withdrawal and the calculation of the refund will be based upon the last day of attendance.

(a) Constructive Withdrawal

The absence of a student from the School for more than 14 consecutive days without an approved Leave of Absence shall constitute constructive notice of cancellation to the School.

For purposes of cancellation, the date shall be the last date of attendance. Any refund due under the refund policy will be issued within 45 calendar days of the date which is deemed to constitute constructive notice of cancellation.

(b) Withdrawn Students with Tuition Balance Due

For students who have withdrawn with balances due to the School, payment in full or signing up for a 12 month payment plan within 45 calendar days of the issuance of the tuition due notice is required or the account will be referred to an outside collection agency. To mitigate any financial or physical hardship associated with the withdrawal, the school grant of up to $2,100.00 referenced on p. 16 of the catalog will be applied to withdrawn students who can demonstrate that their withdrawal is caused by one of the following situations:

i. serious injury or illness;
ii. chronic illness;
iii. a medical issue of a family member in which the student has to become a part-time or fulltime caretaker of that family member;
iv. a mental health condition;
v. a sudden or consistent lack of transportation issue;
vi. a significant cost of living increase.

Graduation Requirements

In order to receive a diploma in clinical massage therapy, a student must satisfy all of the following:

- complete all required courses with a minimum average in each course of 70 per cent, and within the maximum time frame;
- attend at least 85 per cent of the scheduled 600 program class hours;
- meet all the terms and conditions of any probation (if applicable);
- complete all financial aid exit forms, if applicable;
- pay all tuition fees and any incidental administrative charges due to the School in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in their enrollment agreement.

State Licensing

The School makes no representation that a student who successfully completes their program of study and graduates from The Soma Institute will be eligible for licensing in the State of Illinois or any other state. For requirements of licensure, students should refer to the Illinois *Massage Licensing Act* or the applicable statute in the state in which they intend to obtain certification.

Student Records and Confidentiality

The Soma institute adheres to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) as amended. Any student wishing to inspect his or her records, including grades and attendance, should arrange an appointment with the Student Services to view the records. The student shall receive access within 45 days of the request. If a student wishes to amend a record they believe is inaccurate they should appeal in writing to Student Services. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(a) Authorizing Release

Student records are confidential and no unauthorized person may view those records or be given information from them without the express written permission of the student. A form authorizing release of the information can be obtained from Student Services.

(b) Rules of Disclosure

Information may be released from a student's record without written consent of the student to the following:

- Soma Institute officials who have legitimate interest in the records. These officials are persons employed by the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic, or support staff position as well as a person or company with whom the School has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent). A School official so defined has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her administrative responsibility;
- officials of another school, upon request, if the student seeks or intends to enroll at that institution;
- certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Inspector General, or state or local educational authorities in connection with state or federally supported educational programs;
- organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of, the School in order to: develop, validate, or administer predictive tests, administer student aid programs, or improve instruction;
- accrediting commissions to carry out their functions;
- parents who claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes; or parents of a student regarding the student's violation of any Federal, State, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the school, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the school determines the student committed a disciplinary violation and the student is under the age of 21;
- appropriate parties to comply with a judicial order or lawfully-ordered subpoena;
- appropriate parties in health and safety emergencies; school must document rationale for student record;
- in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied, or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid;
- a victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense, in which the disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceeding with respect to that alleged crime or offense regardless of the findings;
- the general public, the final results of a disciplinary proceeding, if the school determines the student is an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense and the student has committed a violation of the school's rules or policies with respect to the allegation made against him or her.

The School may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. If students do not wish such information to be disclosed, they

should advise the School accordingly. The opt-out continues in place after a student leaves the School.

The student has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failure by the Soma Institute to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Correspondence should be addressed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

(c) Address Updates, Telephones, and Email Changes

It is the responsibility of the student to keep the School informed of up-to-date permanent and local address, telephone, and e-mail information. All changes must be reported promptly. We will ensure that records are updated accordingly.

(d) Official Transcripts

Each student, whether they are in good academic and financial standing or not, receives one official transcript at the completion of the course of study or upon withdrawal. Additional transcripts may be requested in writing by the student/former student/a prospective employer. There is no charge for additional transcripts.

Classroom and Clinical Education Standards

(a) Class Participation Policy

Students are expected to actively participate in every class. There is to be no sleeping in class or clinic time. Students may not stay in class when they are unable or unwilling to participate. Students, at their sole discretion, may refuse to act as a client in lab classes. They will, however, be required to work as a student therapist and are subject to the Class Participation Policy.

(b) Partnered Activity Policy

The Soma Institute strives to maintain a fair and professional environment. Teachers will randomly assign partners for all partnered class activities. Students may be dismissed from class when they are unable or unwilling to participate with their assigned partner.

(c) Professional Dress Code Policy

One of the most important reasons for the dress code policy is to prepare students to enter the clinical massage therapy profession. Students – future massage therapists – are expected to maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance during all activities associated with the Clinical Massage Therapy Program. Accordingly, the following dress code standards are required:

- Non-surgical scrub top and pants uniforms must be worn to all classes and clinics.
- Shoes must be closed-toed and low-heeled. Sandals are not permitted. Rubber-soled shoes are strongly recommended. Sneakers and tennis shoes are recommended.
- Jewelry should be minimal (watches or bracelets on wrists and long necklaces and earrings and rings are not permitted).

(d) Personal Hygiene, Hair, and Fingernails Policy

Proper grooming and personal hygiene are important characteristics for professionals and students alike and is respectful of colleagues. It is, therefore, imperative that students observe the following standards:

- Fingernails must be clean, at a length no longer than the fingertip, and smooth to ensure student and client safety.
- Shoulder length or longer hair must be pulled back and secured above the shoulder and away from the face.

- Scented perfumes, aftershaves, body sprays, and/or colognes are not permitted as they my offend or elicit allergic reactions.
- Smoking odors of any kind are prohibited.

(e) Classroom Hygiene, Food, and Beverage Policy

- The Soma Institute strives to maintain a clean and professional environment. Eating is strictly prohibited in any classroom. Beverages, however, are allowed in classrooms.
- Massage table and accessory equipment must be sanitized before and after each treatment and class. The area around massage tables must be tidied. Personal belongings must be stored under the massage tables.

(f) Disciplinary/Reporting Actions in Clinics

Clinic supervisors may remove a student from the clinical rotation, at any time, if the supervisor feels that the student has (a) behaved in an inappropriate manner; (b) placed a client in a potentially harmful situation; (c) violated the site's guidelines; or (d) violated the guidelines included in this catalog/handbook.

(g) Transportation to Clinical Sites

Students are responsible for obtaining transportation to and from all clinical education site assignments at the student's expense. This includes, but is not limited to, the expenses associated with fuel and parking. The Soma Institute is not responsible for costs or damages incurred while traveling to or from the clinical education sites.

(h) Compensation for Massage Therapy

The *Massage Therapy Licensing Act of Illinois* (Section 25d) prohibits students from accepting or receiving money/ compensation for massage therapy before the student is licensed to practice massage therapy. Students in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from The Soma Institute.

(i) Cell Phones/Smart Watches/Headphones/Ear Buds/Smart Glasses Policy

Cell phones may only be used during class time for course-related activities as directed by the instructor. Calls and/or messaging must be taken outside of the classroom without exception. Ear buds, headphones, smart glasses, smart watches, and other such devices shall not be worn during or used during class time. Any electronic device that rings or makes a perceivable noise during a quiz, test or examination will result in a grade of zero for that quiz, test, or examination.

(j) Recording Devices in Class and Social Media

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of students, video recording and still photography of classes is strictly prohibited. This prohibition covers the use of cameras, cell phones, tablets, computers, smart watches, smart glasses, or any other recording device. Students are prohibited from posting or sending any images, videos or making any disparaging, inflammatory, vulgar or threatening comments about any students, faculty, or the School via electronic means including email newsletters, social networking sites, and texts.

(k) Translation Dictionaries for Examinations

In conformity with Federation of State Massage Therapy Board Examination (MBLEX) rules, translation dictionaries of any type are not allowed to be used when taking exams and quizzes.

(l) Auditing a Course

Students may register to audit courses which they have successfully completed in order to review and build on acquired knowledge and skills. Students auditing a course do not write examinations and do not participate in class discussions unless otherwise directed by the course instructor. They do not appear on the class roll. No grade or attendance credit is awarded for audited courses. Courses taken on an audit basis fulfill no curricular requirements. Clinical Education 1, 2 & 3 cannot be audited. Any student

actively enrolled in the program may audit a course without additional charges. To schedule an audit, the student must complete a Course Audit Enrollment Agreement and present a duly executed copy of the form to the course instructor each time they audit a class. Participation in laboratory classes is subject to space availability.

(m) Scantron Test Grading

All written tests normally use Scantron answer sheets and are graded on Scantron test scoring machines. It is therefore imperative that students carefully read and adhere to the Scantron Answer Sheet instructions making sure that all markings are dark and recorded using a No. 2 pencil and that changed answers are completely erased. Failure to comply with these instructions will invalidate test results and a grade of zero will be entered into the students' gradebook. Damaged, discolored, creased, folded or mutilated Scantron answer sheets will be rejected. Photocopies or facsimiles are also not acceptable.

(n) Academic Integrity

Students enrolled at The Soma Institute are expected to adhere to the School's standards of academic integrity. Questions about the acceptability of specific behavior should be addressed to the appropriate faculty member or Program Director. The following is a non-exhaustive list of types of behavior that violate the standards of academic integrity.

- Cheating: using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for regrading; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name.
- Plagiarism: submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.
- Fabrication: falsifying or inventing any information, data, or citation; presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.
- Obtaining an unfair advantage: (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating, or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing learning resource materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) unauthorized collaborating on an academic assignment; (d) retaining, possessing, using, or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination; (e) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; or (f) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
- Aiding and abetting academic dishonesty: (i) providing material, information, or other assistance to another person with knowledge that such aid could be used in any of the violations stated above; or (ii) providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.
- Falsification of records and official documents: i.e., altering documents affecting academic records or forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official academic document, grade report, petition, ID card, or any other official document.
- Unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems: (a) viewing or altering computer records, (b) modifying computer programs or systems, (c) releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access, or (d) interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information.

Implementation of Academic Integrity Policies

In order to implement these principles of academic integrity, the administration and faculty will ensure the following rules are obeyed:

i. In no event should students be given custody of, or other responsibility over, examinations prior to their administration.

ii. Where feasible, efforts will be made to place students in alternate seats during examinations. In circumstances where it is known in advance that this will not be possible, other measures, such as the use of alternating examination formats, will be used.

iii. Instructors will inform students of the academic requirements of each course. Such information may appropriately include (a) notice of the materials that may be used during examinations and on other assignments; and (b) whether electronic devices such as cell phones may be brought into an examination.

iv. All examinations will be proctored.

v. Faculty members will ensure that their teaching assistants understand and are able to carry out the policies set forth herein.

D. Conduct Policies

Shared Responsibility

The Soma Institute is a diverse community of students, faculty and staff that celebrates a strong sense of shared community values and responsibility. Students who enter this community acknowledge that working within a community requires compromise and sensitivity to others. A strong community depends on respect for the rights of others, considerate behavior, and good judgment. Students are expected to maintain high standards of personal conduct; behavior should reflect maturity and respect for the rights of all members of the community. Students and their rights are protected by the Bill of Rights, the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, and the School's policies and procedures. A notice to students of their rights under the Illinois Private Business and Vocational Schools Act is posted at the School.

Rules of Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with commonly accepted standards of behavior, federal, state, and municipal laws and to observe School policies on attendance, on satisfactory academic progress, and on unprofessional conduct. Students are responsible for their own actions at all times. Ignorance of School policies or the law is not a defense against disciplinary action. Lack of intention to violate a School policy will not generally excuse an infraction. Committing one or more of the following offenses subjects the student to the possibility of facing the School's disciplinary procedures:

- Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, or knowingly furnishing false information to the School.
- Forgery, unauthorized alteration, or misuse of school documents, records, or identification.
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, security, disciplinary procedures, or other school activities, or fire, police or emergency services.
- Causing physical harm to any person or verbal or physical threats, intimidation, or coercion of any member of the School community or any other conduct which threatens or endangers the health, safety, or well–being of any such person.
- Failure to comply with directions of School officials acting in the performance of their duties, and/or failure to identify oneself to these persons or to security staff when requested to do so.
- Attempted or actual theft of or damage to school property or services or property of others while on school premises; knowing possession of stolen property.
- Unauthorized entry to or use of The Soma Institute's facilities, equipment, or resources; or unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of keys to any school premises.
- Practicing massage therapy in contravention of state or local ordinances.
- Entering into dual relationships with faculty, administrative staff (e.g., friendships, socializing, dating, client/therapist relationship).
- Unlawful use of alcohol on any School property or as part of any School activity except as expressly permitted by the School's alcohol policy.
- Use, manufacture, distribution, or possession of illegal drugs on School property or as part of any School activity.

- Being on School property in a drunken condition or under the influence of illegal substances.
- Misuse or abuse of over-the-counter or prescription medication or of alcoholic beverages.
- Possession of any firearms, weapons, fireworks, explosives, ammunition, or abuse of any flammable substance on School property. The term weapon may be defined as any object or substance designed to inflict a wound, threaten injury, cause injury or incapacitate. Weapons may include, but are not limited to, all firearms, pellet guns, slingshots, stun guns, martial arts devices, switchblade knives, and clubs. Items used for other purposes (such as kitchen knives, scissors, etc.) may also be defined as a "weapon" if an individual engages in behavior which uses such an object in a threatening manner.
- Behavior which is self-destructive, threatening the safety of the individual.
- Sexual assault or sexual harassment, as defined in School policies on sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- Knowingly violating the terms of any disciplinary sanction imposed in accordance with this Catalog.

Clinical Education Code of Conduct

The Soma Institute subscribes to the following code of conduct:

i. Nondiscrimination: It is unethical for a student to refuse to participate in the care of a person based on race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, or sexual orientation. It is also unethical to refuse to participate in the care of a client solely because of medical risk, or perceived risk, to the student. It is not, however, unethical for the pregnant student to refuse to participate in activities that pose a significant risk to her fetus.

ii. Confidentiality: The client's right to the confidentiality of his or her medical record is a fundamental tenet of care. The discussion of problems or diagnoses of a client in public violates patient confidentiality and is unethical. Under no circumstances can any client file be removed from the School, nor is photocopying of the record permitted.

iii. Professional Demeanor: The student should be thoughtful and professional when interacting with clients. Inappropriate behavior includes the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks with sexual overtones.

iv. Honesty: Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity in all aspects of their education and in their interactions with clients, staff, faculty, and colleagues. They may not cheat, plagiarize, or assist others in the commission of these acts. The student is bound to know, understand, and preserve professional ethics and has a duty to report any breach of these ethics by other students.

v. Compensation: Money, tips, gifts, or hospitality may not be accepted under any circumstances.

vi. Criticism of Colleagues: It is unethical and harmful for a student to disparage without good evidence the professional competence, knowledge, qualifications, or services of a colleague to staff, students, or a client. It is also unethical to imply by word, gesture, or deed that a client has been poorly managed or mistreated by a colleague without tangible evidence.

Disciplinary Procedures and Sanctions

The student disciplinary process is not a criminal proceeding. Student disciplinary proceedings can take place before, during, or after criminal and civil proceedings relating to the same incident.

(a) Disciplinary Proceedings

(i) Initiation of Disciplinary Proceedings

Any administrative official of The Soma Institute, any member of the faculty, or any student of the School may file a complaint, either written or oral, against any student of the School for misconduct. The complaint should be made to the President. All complaints must be filed within 10 calendar days from the date of the alleged violation.

- After receiving notification, the President shall promptly obtain whatever information is necessary from those persons involved in the incident in order to understand the nature of the incident and to determine whether any immediate action is needed relating to the health or safety of the person or persons involved, as well as the health or safety of other students, faculty, or staff.
- The President shall then cause an investigation to be made of the charges. At any time during this investigation, the President may determine that the charges may be resolved administratively. An administrative disposition is one which does not involve use of a hearing, described later. During any investigation of any charge, the President may seek to interview anyone, including the accused, whom the President believes may have knowledge of the matter. Any student who agrees to provide information must provide truthful information. If a student provides information that is not truthful, that conduct may be the basis for a complaint and disciplinary action.
- Pending action on the charges, the status of a student should not be altered, or his or her right to be present on the premises or attend classes suspended, except for reasons relating to his or her physical or emotional safety, the physical or emotional safety of the accuser, the well-being of members of the School community, or preservation of School property.
- If the President determines that the alleged misconduct requires the institution of disciplinary proceedings, she shall send a written Notice of Charges to the accused. The Notice shall identify the charges and state the date, time, and place for the hearing.
- Within five (5) calendar days after receipt of the Notice of Charges, the accused shall respond in writing to the President if he or she wishes to oppose the charge. The student's written response shall also state whether the student intends to bring an adviser to the hearing and if so, the adviser's occupation and his or her relationship to the student. If the student fails to respond, the President will decide on an appropriate resolution based on all information available to her.

(ii) Conduct of Hearing

The Hearing Committee will consist of the President and an administration or faculty designee. A hearing may be conducted in the absence of the accused and accuser, if either or both fail to appear.

- Admission of any person to the hearing shall be at the discretion of the President. A student's prior or ongoing disciplinary notations will be reviewed during the Hearing process. The hearing shall be private.
- Information at the hearing shall be presented only at the discretion of the President. The Hearing Committee's determination shall be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the accused student violated the Rules of Conduct or other School policies, rules, or regulations.
- Adviser may be a student or an individual from outside of the School. The accuser and the accused, however, are responsible for presenting their own cases. The accuser and the accused may consult with their advisers before, during, and after the hearing, but the advisers may not present information, question witnesses or the President or administration designee, or make statements or arguments during the hearing. The adviser may only be present in the Hearing at such times that the person he or she is advising is permitted to be present. Given the limited role of an adviser and the compelling interest of the School in concluding the matter expeditiously, the work of a Hearing will not, as a general practice, be delayed due to the unavailability of an adviser.
- No recommendation for the imposition of disciplinary penalties shall be based solely upon the failure of the accused to answer the charges or to appear at the hearing. During the Hearing Committee's deliberations, the only persons who shall be present shall be members of the Hearing Committee, and any advisers to the Hearing Committee if invited by the Hearing Committee.
- The accused, the accuser, and their advisers, if any, shall not be present during deliberations. At any time during the proceedings, including during the deliberations, the Hearing Committee has the discretion to ask for additional information from any person, including persons who have previously appeared before the Hearing Committee and persons who have not appeared.

The Hearing Committee shall make a final written report of its decision, including any recommended sanctions, and the reasons therefore. The President shall notify both the accuser and the accused of the decision and implement the sanctions, if any.

(iii) Appeals

Either the accuser or the accused may appeal the Hearing Committee's decision within five (5) calendar days of receiving notice of the decision. An appeal must be made in writing, must be submitted to the President, and must state the basis for the appeal.

Appeals are only permitted to proceed if the written notice of the appeal indicates that there is new information which was not available at the time of the hearing. If the notice indicates that there is such new information, the President will reconvene the Hearing Committee and notify the accuser and the accused of the date, time, and place for the Hearing Board to consider the new information. The Hearing Committee will consider the new information using the procedures set forth above for the Hearing Committee and reach a decision.

(iv) Record of the Proceedings

The President shall make a written record summarizing all Hearing Committee proceedings; on occasion, at the School's discretion, tapes may be used. All minutes and tapes are confidential and remain in the custody of the President.

(b) Sanctions

The Soma Institute will impose sanctions on students for behavior which, in its judgment, contributes in any way to the disruption of the orderly course of educational processes at the School. Sanctions will be imposed if the School finds that it is more likely than not that the Rules of Conduct, policies contained in this Catalog, other applicable rules and regulations have been violated. These sanctions are defined below:

- Admonishment: An oral reprimand to the offender.
- Warning: A written reprimand to the offender.
- Disciplinary Probation: A probationary status for a specified period of time, during which the offender must demonstrate behavior acceptable to the School. Additional restrictions or conditions may be imposed. Violations of the terms of the Disciplinary Probation, or any other violations of School policy, rules, or regulations during the period of probation may result in suspension or expulsion from the School.
- Loss of Privileges: Denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time.
- Suspension: Exclusion for a period of time from one or more classes, School premises and/or other privileges or activities as set forth in the notice of suspension. Notice of a Suspension may appear on the student's academic transcript for up to two years after the date the Suspension is concluded.
- Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the School and termination of student status and exclusion from School premises, privileges and activities. An expulsion will be recorded on the student's permanent academic transcript. Any refund due under the refund policy will be issued within 30 calendar days of the date of expulsion. If the expelled student owes money to the School, it must be paid within 30 calendar days of the date of the expulsion.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy

The Soma Institute will not allow any student, on the basis of sex, to be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity at the School.

The School prohibits sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation. The Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy applies to applicants, students, and employees.

(a) Reporting and Title IX Coordinator

Any person may report sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, whether or not that person experienced the conduct. Reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email to:

Kathleen O'Neil, Title IX Coordinator
The Soma Institute
18 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 230
Chicago, IL 60603
Telephone: (312) 939-2723
Email: koneil@soma.edu

Reports may be submitted at any time, including outside business hours, using the coordinator's email, telephone number, or mailing address. Third-party and bystander reports are accepted. Anonymous reports are accepted, although anonymity may limit the School's ability to respond. In an emergency, call 911. Individuals may report to the School, law enforcement, or both, and may decline to report to law enforcement.

Questions about the application of Title IX may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at (800) 421-3481 or www.ed.gov/ocr, or both.

(b) Supportive Measures and Complaint Procedures

Reasonably available supportive measures, including adjustments to academic schedules or working conditions, are offered without charge and without requiring a formal complaint. The Title IX Coordinator can provide information about available measures, reporting options, and support resources.

Students and employees may submit complaints of sex discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. A formal complaint requesting investigation of sexual harassment may be submitted in writing to the coordinator, including by email. The School's grievance procedures address investigation, review of evidence, applicable hearing procedures, written decisions, and appeals. The Soma Institute uses the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard to determine responsibility. Sanctions may include warnings, probation, loss of privileges, suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment.

Retaliation for reporting misconduct or participating in the complaint process is prohibited. A student who makes a good-faith report will not receive disciplinary sanctions for a student conduct violation revealed through that report unless the School determines that the violation was egregious.

(c) Full Policy and Resources

The complete Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy, including definitions, reporting options, supportive measures, complaint procedures, party rights, sanctions, and resource information, is available at:

www.soma.edu

A copy may also be requested from the Title IX Coordinator.

Policy on Harassment

(a) No Tolerance Policy

The Soma Institute is committed to creating and sustaining an environment conducive to learning and working in which each student has the opportunity to grow, develop, learn, and contribute fully to our collective success. Accordingly, we will not tolerate sexual harassment or harassment or intimidation between students, or between faculty/staff and students based on race, color, national origin, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran, marital or any other status protected by federal, state or local law. Any student, faculty or staff found to have engaged in conduct inconsistent with this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion and/or termination from The Soma Institute.

(b) Identifying Harassment

Harassment generally involves a demonstration of hostility or aversion towards an individual because of his or her race, color, national origin, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran, marital or other status protected by law that (1) creates a hostile or offensive work or learning environment, (2) unreasonably interferes with the person's work or academic performance, or (3) otherwise adversely affects the person's employment or academic opportunities. As mentioned previously, when harassment involves a student, faculty or staff member it may also include a tangible adverse action, such as a significant change in employment or academic status or benefits.

The following are examples of behaviors that may be considered harassment. None of these behaviors will be tolerated at The Soma Institute:

- *Epithets, disparaging remarks, slurs, demeaning stereotyping or "jokes" whether spoken, accessed on the internet, written on walls, used in memos or e-mails, left on voicemail messages, etc. and whether expressed as words or in the form of photographs, drawings, graffiti or computer-related visual materials*
- *Hostile or intimidating acts or threats, such as stalking, blocking someone's path or hostile gestures*
- *Mocking, teasing or taunting (e.g., someone's accent, stutter, or religious beliefs)*
- *Persistently excluding someone from normal work-related or academic-related activities, informal communication channels, daily assistance and support, or team assignments*
- *Pranks (e.g., hiding someone's crutches)*
- *Deliberate degradation of someone's possessions (e.g., wiping feet on a prayer rug)*

(c) Creating A Harassment-Free Environment

The Soma Institute expects students, faculty and staff to interact with each other and anyone conducting business with The Soma Institute in a professional and respectful manner. Regardless of specific legal definitions of sexual harassment and harassment, if your conduct could reasonably be offensive to another, then that conduct is not appropriate to a work or academic relationship. When discussing matters personally important to you, such as religious beliefs, you are expected to be sensitive to others.

(d) Responsibilities and Investigations

(i) Reporting

The Soma Institute encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Prompt reporting is encouraged so that constructive action may be taken before relationships become unduly strained. While no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention are the most effective means for resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Perceived retaliation should be reported immediately. All reports should be made to the President.

Besides making a report, if you believe you or another individual is being harassed, we

encourage you to let the offender know that behavior or action you perceive as offensive or biased and ask that it be stopped or corrected, depending on the situation. Often, this action alone will resolve the problem. We understand, however, that an individual may prefer to report a particular incident through the reporting procedures.

Faculty and staff Managers and supervisors are required to promptly report to the President all complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation they receive (including formal and informal complaints, as well as reports made by students other than the target of the conduct).

(ii) Investigations & Confidentiality

The Soma Institute will make every reasonable effort to resolve all complaints. Any complaint received will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary or believed appropriate, interviews with others who may have observed the alleged conduct or have relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent possible while allowing The Soma Institute to conduct an appropriate investigation and take corrective action or legal action, as The Soma Institute determines is necessary or prudent.

(iii) Resolution

Conduct found to be inconsistent with or in violation of The Soma Institute's Equal Employment Opportunity and anti-harassment policies will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling and/or disciplinary action, such as warning, suspension, expulsion or termination as The Soma Institute believes appropriate under the circumstances. The Soma Institute also will take corrective action, as appropriate, to remedy the effects of any harassment or retaliation and prevent its re-occurrence. A knowingly false complaint or complaint that is both false and intentionally made for an improper reason may result in appropriate disciplinary action. This does not include complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith.

(iv) Safeguards/No Retaliation

Harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, discrimination or retaliation in any other form is strictly prohibited against anyone for: (i) making a good faith internal complaint of conduct violating this policy, (ii) filing a complaint allowed by any equal employment opportunity law or regulation ("EEO laws"); (iii) participating in an investigation or any other activity undertaken by The Soma Institute or any governmental agency related to compliance with this policy or any EEO law; (iv) opposing in good faith any act or practice that violates any EEO law; or (v) exercising any right under any EEO law.

(e) The Soma Institute Rules Strictly Enforced

All students, faculty and staff are expected to treat each other with respect. The success of the School depends upon students, faculty and staff practicing the professionalism which fosters the most conducive learning environment.

E. Drug Free Schools Statement

(a) Policy

The Soma Institute, as required by The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, Public Law 101-226 and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1998 has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees. In addition to the health risks, there are heavy penalties under federal law for the use, possession, and distribution of illegal substances which will result in fines and imprisonment. Full details on the legal penalties and health risks can be found in the School's Campus Crime Report.

(b) Standards & Sanctions

All students and employees of The Soma Institute may not illegally use, sell, possess, manufacture, or distribute any substance prohibited by local, state or federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, illegal drugs and controlled substances, including cannabis, narcotics, cocaine, heroin, prescription medications, synthetic cannabinoids, or other drugs and any chemical substantially similar to a controlled substance.

Please note that federal laws require The Soma Institute to prohibit the use and possession of cannabis on campus, regardless of state law, therefore cannabis remains an illegal drug under this policy.

Students and employees may not be on School property in a drunken condition or under the influence of illegal substances, including cannabis. Any student or employee found in violation of these prohibitions shall be subject to disciplinary action, which action might include expulsion for students and dismissal for employees.

As a provision of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1998, all employees, including student employees, who are convicted of a workplace-related drug offense shall notify the President within 5 (five) working days following the conviction or be subject to immediate suspension without pay by their supervisor and subject to immediate termination by the President. If the employee so convicted is engaged in a federally funded program, the appropriate federal funding agency shall be notified of the conviction with 10 (ten) working days after receiving notice of the employee's conviction.

(c) Counseling Resources

Students and employees who think they need assistance with a drug or alcohol problem, or know someone who does, are encouraged to call the help lines listed below:

Alcoholics Anonymous (chicagoaa.com) 312.346.1475

Gateway Foundation (gatewayfoundation.org) 877.352.9566

HRDI Community Triage Center (hrdi.org) 773.291.5000

Haymarket Center (haymarketcenter.org) 312.226.4357

Narcotics Anonymous (chicagona.com) 708.848.4884

South Wood Interventions (southwoodinterventions.org) 773.737.4600

Westside Community Wellness Center 773.873.7555

F. Complaints Procedure

a. At The Soma Institute, all staff and faculty endeavor to make the student learning experience a positive one. Nonetheless, a student with complaints about any aspect of the School's operation that cannot be resolved through a meeting with either a faculty member or a School official may put the complaint in writing to the President. The President will ensure that a response, also in writing, is forwarded to the student within 10 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

b. A student who is not satisfied with the President's response may file an online complaint with one of the school's two regulatory agencies. Please direct all such inquiries to:

Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
Private Business and Vocational Schools Division
1 N. Old State Capital Plaza, Suite 333
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1377
Telephone: 217.782.2551
https://complaints.ibhe.org

OR

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET)
Complaint Administrator
1722 N. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: 202.955.1113
https://accet.or/about-us/contact-us

Formal notices of complaint procedures for ACCET and IBHE are posted at the school and copies are kept on file in the President's Office

Hours of Operation

Monday through Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Fridays and Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Sundays: Closed

Holiday Closings

January
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

May
Memorial Day

June
Juneteenth

July
Independence Day

September
Labor Day

November
Thanksgiving (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday)

December
Christmas Day

Note: If holiday falls on a Saturday, school is closed on Friday. If holiday falls on Sunday, school is closed on Monday.

Administration

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Elizabeth Mooney, B.S., DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.
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