

## **Diploma of Remedial Massage – Statement on Health Funds**

We understand that the ability to claim rebates with private health insurance companies is important to many Remedial Massage practitioners. For this reason, we have designed our latest HLT52015 qualification to meet all major association and private health fund current requirements. The process of applying for health fund provider status can be a complicated one, so we have answered some of the frequently asked questions below.

Please note that these are guidelines only and subject to the changes of individual health funds and associations. Students are advised to speak with their chosen industry association for the latest provider eligibility criteria from each health fund.

### **What is the current status of private health fund and provider recognition for Remedial Massage graduates?**

It is important to understand that there are many private health funds in Australia (over 50), some of which are setting their own unique set of provider recognition criteria. This means that provider recognition criteria varies from one private health fund to another, and these are subject to change at any time at their discretion.

In order to gain provider status with a private health fund, a massage therapist is required to meet the recognition criteria set by the respective private health fund. These requirements are commercial decisions by some private health funds and are created separately to, and are independent from, the standards set by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) which registered training organisations (RTOs) must deliver to award your recognized qualification.

Private health funds provide these provider recognition criteria directly to the industry associations, not to the RTOs. Therefore, RTOs communicate with the major massage associations for information on provider recognition criteria, and this information is sometimes conflicting between different associations. We then provide this information to you based upon our best intentions to support you as a graduate, and is our interpretation of the current status.

### **What are the main provider recognition criteria imposed by private health funds?**

As explained, these can vary between health funds. Below are examples of the various current criteria that private health funds have set as requirements. For details on specific private health fund criteria, students and graduates should contact their preferred massage association.

- Duration of Qualification – The qualification must be completed in a minimum of 12-months full time, or 18-months part time.
- Certificate IV upgrades – Some health funds have specified that students upgrading from Certificate IV qualification must still complete a minimum of 12 months at diploma level.
- Clinical Training Hours – Some health funds set the criteria that supervised clinical training must be done on campus and be at least 20% of the course. Other health funds have specified 200 hours of clinical and practical training.



- On-Campus Practical training – All practical training that requires skill based knowledge should be delivered on campus (including surface anatomy, palpation, clinical examination, assessment of conditions, treatment plans, and massage techniques). Online or home study is not recognized by some health funds.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - Some private health funds may not accept RPL as course hours, with specific mention to Certificate IV training meeting the above standards. (Please note that health funds appear to use RPL and Credit Transfer interchangeably, so the same applies to those receiving credit transfer).

### **Does my massage qualification allow me get provider status for all Health funds?**

Our qualification has been designed to meet all of the above requirements set out by the private health funds, so we believe that your qualification from us will allow you to gain provider status from all major associations as they stand at June 2016.

Massage associations have instructed members to gain letters of confirmation from RTOs to show that graduates have met these requirements. Each association has requested a slightly different format for this information to be presented. If your association asks this of you, then we will support you to complete the form. Upon written request, your Program Manager will review your enrolment and confirm whether you have met the requirements.

New and current students will have a choice to select a program that currently meets private health fund provider recognition criteria. However, there is no guarantee changes by health funds will not be imposed.

### **Do I need to have health fund provider status?**

No. Many Remedial Massage graduates work in thriving practices and have successful careers without the reliance on specific private health funds. Full health fund provider status is only required for those who feel their job role requires them to offer rebates to those clients with private health insurance cover.

### **Can I upgrade my old qualifications to the latest version?**

As an RTO, we provide the opportunity for you to upgrade your previous qualification to the latest training package. Most health funds accept any course credits granted to students based on RPL that meets the Australian Quality Skills Authority (ASQA) standards, however some health funds have indicated that the RPL may not be accepted if the prior training does not meet their criteria. For this reason, it remains the students responsibility to ensure that their total study (including previous training contributing to any RPL, and new training in the HLT52015 training package) meets their chosen association and health fund requirements.

Please speak to one of our course and careers advisors if you are interested in further information on the upgrade opportunities.



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Further information on the ongoing relationship between the private health insurance industry and the massage therapy profession can be found [here](#) in the Association of Massage Therapists educator news from March 2016.

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