COMTA Completion & Placement Chart
Instructions Packet

Effective September 2017.

Due February 1 of each year, submitted with Annual Report

NOTE: To watch an explanatory video with examples of completion, click the image below:

1. Open the COMTA C&P Chart spreadsheet.

2. If you receive a "Security Warning" at the top of the spreadsheet, **click "Enable Content."** (It is safe. The automatic calculation of reporting periods will not happen if macros are disabled.)

3. Save As, using **School Name, Program/Schedule Name, Due Date** (i.e. 2/1/18)

4. Save a new chart for each certificate/degree program AND schedule/track offered (i.e. FT, PT).

5. Watch the brief **instructional video**.

6. Read the **technical Instructions** (bottom tab in spreadsheet).

7. Click on the *C&P Chart* tab. Enter all school and program title information.

8. Enter the required **Report Date** as provided or directed by the Commission staff in the following format: e.g. 2*/1/18*.

9. Enter the **Program Length in Months** (round up to the nearest whole number). The Reporting Period Beginning and Ending dates of the 12-month reporting period will be **automatically** generated the chart.

10. Enter **cohort start dates** (Line 1) which occurred during y 12-month reporting period.

11. Print/Read the **Glossary of Terms** (bottom tab in spreadsheet) which will explain how to complete every line of the chart.

12. Complete the Chart as directed by Glossary and video. Do NOT try to enter data into protected fields. If you receive an error, it means that a field has an imbedded calculation that cannot be changed.

13. Lines 19 & 20 are **optional**.

14. Remember, you must still **maintain verifiable records** as back-up to the numbers on the chart. If a graduate is listed as "Placed," you must maintain evidence of self-employment or employer contact information.

15. Refer to **COMTA Student Outcomes Tracking Policy** (below) for additional explanation and guidance.

COMPLETION, PLACEMENT RATES

Effective April 2017

Minimum accepted rates for Completion and Placement as calculated on the COMTA Student Rosters:

Program Length	Completion Rate Benchmark	Placement Rate Benchmark
<= 6 months	65%	65%
7 – 12 months	60%	
13 – 18 months	51%	
19 – 23 months	47%	
24+ months	40%	

If a program reports completion/placement rates lower than the COMTA benchmarks, improvement plans and additional monitoring or reporting will be required as deemed appropriate by the Commission. If a program demonstrates a pattern of not meeting the benchmarks, adverse action by the Commission may be taken.

Minimum benchmarks for licensure exam pass rates (e.g. MBLEX) are still being analyzed and not yet in effect.

COMTA Student Outcomes Tracking Policy

These policies support and extend COMTA Accreditation Standard VIII.C. As such, institutions programs must demonstrate compliance with both.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Accrediting agencies are required to assess institutions and programs based on success in achieving their stated objectives and continual efforts to improve educational quality. One metric used to determine success of a vocational program is the completion and placement rates, as well as applicable licensure exam pass rates of its students. Metrics are increasingly important to the US Department of Education, particularly for those students receiving federal funds for their education. However, all institutions and programs are encouraged to use this data for all students to ensure that they have created a program which students can complete and leads to successful employment.

Descriptions of the Professions represented by COMTA:

Massage Therapy

Massage Therapists and bodyworkers are skilled practitioners who work with a variety of client demographics in one-to-one sessions. These sessions may be conducted in a public space with the client remaining clothed, or in a private room with the client disrobed and draped with a sheet or towel. Massage Therapists and bodyworkers have extensive knowledge of musculoskeletal anatomy for the entire body, basic physiological understanding related to the effects of soft tissue manipulation, and awareness of the psychological benefits to be gained through receiving massage and bodywork. They perform basic assessment of the client's health conditions and preferences for the session to ensure the methods used will be in the best interest of the client's health and wellness. Recommendations for additional sessions and post-session care may be provided. They consult with and refer to other health professionals when client conditions exceed the massage therapist's/bodyworker's education, training, experiences or scope of practice.

Esthetics

Estheticians and skin care specialists are skilled practitioners who work with a variety of client demographics in one-to-one sessions. The sessions may be in a public space with the client remaining clothed, or in a private room with the client disrobed and draped with a sheet or towel. Estheticians and skin care specialists have extensive knowledge of the anatomy of the skin, as well as detailed musculoskeletal knowledge of the head and neck. They have basic understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the whole body, with detailed understanding of the physiological factors which influence skin health. Estheticians and skin care specialists perform assessment of the skin and gather information from the client regarding health conditions and lifestyle factors which may impact methods used during the treatment session as well as the products to be applied to the skin. Recommendations for additional sessions and post-session care may be provided. They consult with and refer to other health professionals when client conditions exceed the esthetician's education, training, and experiences.

Definition of "Placement" for Massage/Bodywork and Skin Care

The employment options for graduates in these fields of study are quite varied. While part-time and full-time employee positions are becoming more available, most graduates are still entering the professional world as independent contractors or sole proprietors immediately after graduating. People choosing to study massage or esthetics frequently use their training as a supplement to other work, or as a part-time occupation while they provide care to family members. Training in these fields is also known to be an outlet for people to do something they love, while the other job(s) they hold provide greater income and benefits.

This makes calculating a "Placement" rate quite challenging. COMTA supports encouraging graduates to seek the type of employment which meets their needs, and we recognize that this may mean that it takes graduates more time to establish themselves after graduation than in other types of employment. Therefore, we aim to evaluate school success regarding graduate employment in a simplified manner.

To be considered "placed", graduates must meet the following criteria:

1. Working legally (having obtained applicable licensing, etc.);

2. Utilizing knowledge and skills acquired during the training;

3. Be either:

    a. Employed: Full-time or part-time work for another entity

    b. Self-employed: Independent contractor, sole proprietor, etc.

4. Be placed within 180 days after graduating

Working legally

Commonly, obtaining a license or permit to practice is the first step, which in itself can take several weeks or even months. COMTA recognizes this potential delay, but we also expect schools to be proactive in guiding their graduates toward applying for the applicable licensing and starting the process as soon as possible.

Utilizing knowledge and skills acquired during the training

A position is considered "within the field of training" if the position description includes qualifications which demand completion of the training, or if the tasks regularly performed are recognizable as massage therapy, bodywork, or skin care. These positions are always considered "Placed".

A position can be considered "related" to the field if the training enhances performance of another role and that enhancement can be clearly identified. For example, some of the skills taught in massage and skin care programs are also included in the scope of other licensed professions. Someone who is already working in another profession might pursue training in either of these fields to expand their skills in their current position. These positions which the student held prior to completing the training can be considered placement, but only when there is clearly an opportunity for the training to be utilized. For instance, a nurse might complete bodywork training to provide additional care for patients, or a Cosmetologist might complete advanced skin care training to offer a wider variety of services. In such cases, the change in services offered or the additional care provided should be described clearly in any documentation for that graduate to substantiate considering them as "Placed".

Graduates who are employed in unrelated fields (not currently using knowledge or skills related to the training) may not be included as "Placed". Specifically, performing unrelated duties in an environment where massage or esthetics services are offered would not be considered "Placed" unless the job description required that training had been completed.

Revised September 2017

<u>Employed</u>

The definitions of part-time and full-time employment may vary based on state and federal laws, employer guidelines for offering benefits, type of environment where services are offered and other factors. COMTA does not believe such distinctions should be relevant to confirming that the education provided was appropriate to enter the professions in question, therefore "employed" is broadly defined as working for another entity, in the field of training or related. There is no minimum timeframe that a graduate must remain employed, however the Commission encourages graduates to report back to their school regarding employment lasting fewer than 30 days to help ensure that the school understands why the graduate is no longer employed at that location, particularly if it is relevant to improving the educational program.

<u>Self-employed</u>

Graduates frequently enter these professions as independent contractors, sole proprietors, or in collaboration with other professionals. The Commission understands that choosing this route may require more time for the graduate to establish their business, thus the graduate is considered "self-employed" based on completing the necessary steps to work legally with this status. No minimum number of clients or hours of work are required, however the Commission encourages graduates to contact their school regarding any challenges they encounter, particularly if it is relevant to improving the educational program. COMTA further recommends that graduates utilize the many services offered by the applicable professional association for free websites, client referral directories and other support for new business owners.

<u>Excluded from Placement</u>

In some instances graduates are simply not able to go to work in the field after graduation. So that these graduates do not count against a school's placement rate, a graduate may be marked as "Excluded". These situations may include one of the following:

- Incarceration
- Active military service
- Death
- Medical conditions that keep the graduate from working
- International students who have left the country
- Further Education*

<u>*Further Education</u> is an exclusion for those program graduates who decided to continue their education after graduating from the training program. *Only graduates who continue their education at an accredited institution and attend at least half-time can be counted.* This information will need to be verified. If the graduate also enters the profession, record them as "Placed" rather than "Excluded".

Verifiable Record Guidelines

Each school is responsible for collecting enough information about graduates such that the placement statistics could be verified by someone else. Because of problems with some schools publicizing over-inflated rates, there is now more scrutiny on these rates at the national level, especially for schools participating in federal financial aid programs. Several accrediting agencies are moving toward an external audit of placement rates to verify that the rates schools report are accurate. At this time, COMTA is encouraging all schools to strengthen their record-keeping for graduate placement and be prepared to show back-up documentation regularly, not just during a scheduled site visit.

- Examples of verifiable records of **employment** include but are not limited to:
  - Employer name and contact information

- o Completion of employer verification form
- o Verbal confirmation by school with employer; notes to verify contact name/date
- Examples of verifiable records of **self-employment** include but are not limited to:
  - o Client logs
  - o Business cards, brochures, or other promotional materials
  - o Website address or screenshot
  - o Signed attestation by graduate
  - o Business permit or license (in addition to massage license)
- Graduate employment records verify that the graduate is **working legally** according to all local professional licensing or credentialing laws and business permit requirements.
  - o Records of state or municipal credentialing or licensure are kept, where available

Reporting Guidelines:

Schools will use the New COMTA Completion & Placement (C&P) Chart to report rates based on cohort start dates. A separate chart for each program/schedule track is required so that schools may analyze the effectiveness of each one to make any necessary improvements.