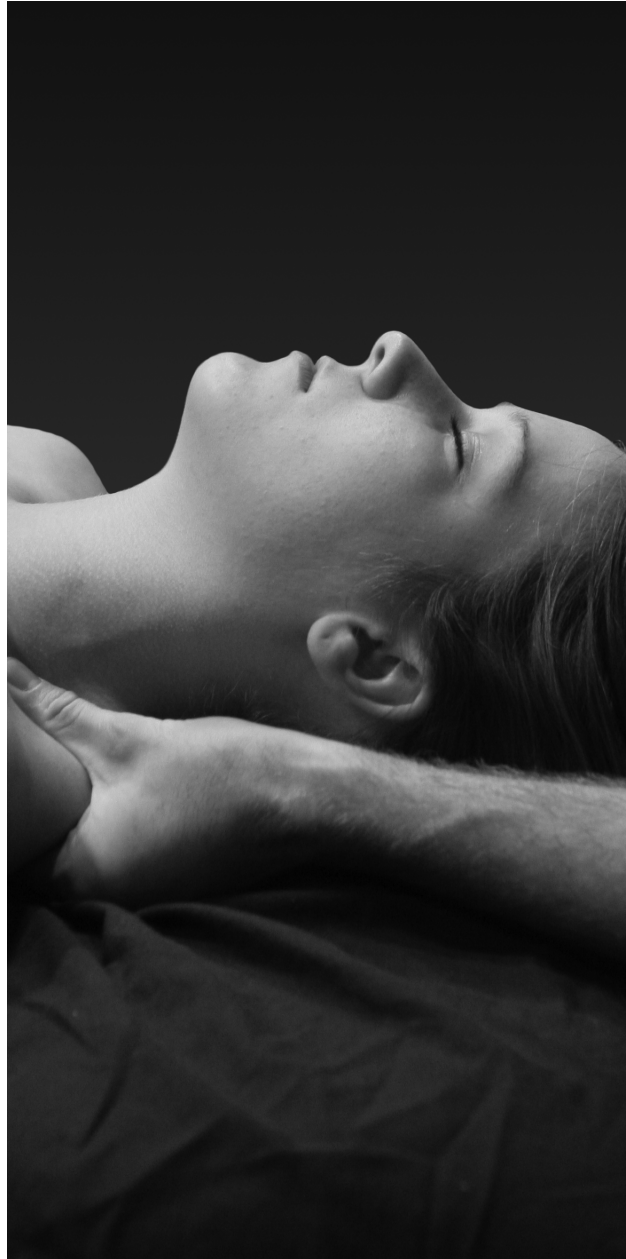


# THE SOMA INSTITUTE

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF CLINICAL MASSAGE THERAPY



**Catalog & Handbook**  
**Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program**  
**2020**

## 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.



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 Soma Institute is authorized under Federal Law to enroll non-immigrant students.



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  
55 East Jackson Boulevard . Suite 300 . Chicago . Illinois . 60604-4110  
1.800.694.5314 (Toll free) . 312.939.0171 (Facsimile)  
[www.soma.edu](http://www.soma.edu)

### Catalog Accuracy

The information in this catalog was accurate at the time of publication, December 12, 2019. 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 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 another.

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

The Soma Institute is committed to excellent teaching and to the personal and intellectual growth of its students. We are continually building on our mission to be a part of the way healthcare is redefined in the United States and to play a larger role in the field of complementary medicine. Soma is dedicated to preparing graduates who will be successful practitioners providing exemplary health care and demonstrating commitment to lifelong learning and community service.

## B. 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, Soma began offering financial assistance through SLM Financial Corporation (a Sallie Mae Company). 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 was authorized by federal law to admit non-immigrant students.

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.

In 2003, Soma began its groundbreaking clinical affiliation with Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

On December 15, 2003 the School became accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET). This validation by a national accrediting agency listed by the U.S. Secretary of Education provides independent verification of the quality of The Soma Institute's educational program.

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 2005, Soma established a clinical affiliation with Swedish Covenant Hospital. That same year, the School achieved a placement rate of 90.5% as reported to the Illinois State Board of Education in the School's annual license renewal.

In 2006, Soma's job placement rate, as reported to the Illinois State Board of Education, reached 96 percent and a clinical affiliation was established with Kindred Hospital North.

In 2007, the School received approval from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training to offer a 300-hour Master Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program.

In 2008, the first Master Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma classes were launched. Soma's Core Program Director, Michael Hovi, was appointed to the Illinois Massage Licensing Board. In December 2008, the School was approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCTMB) as a Continuing Education Approved Provider.

As a testament to its growth, in the spring of 2009, Soma relocated to an expanded facility at 55 East Jackson Boulevard. In June 2009, the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board was held. Current members of the Board include Natalie Tessler of Spa Space, Chris Pappas of Egea Spa, The Spa at Trump International Hotel, and Rochelle Turner of Massage Envy.

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.

## C. 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, Millennium Park, Grant Park, DePaul University, the Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago. Detailed directions to Soma can be found at [www.soma.edu](http://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. Overhead projectors, computerized presentation equipment, TV CD/DVD players, hydrotherapy equipment, white 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.



## **D. Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program**

Soma's 750 clock hour program which is offered both in day and evening-weekend 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 in such areas as oncology and geriatric units, 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. Surveys are also conducted with graduates, employers, and the Advisory Board.

## **E. 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. *(20 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. *(20 clock hours, all lecture)*

#### **Clinical Education 1 (CLED1) - Competency Clinic**

In this course, students apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in the didactic 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. *(20 clock hours, 2 lecture & 18 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. *(20 clock hours, all internship/externship hours)*



### **Clinical Education 3 (CLED3) – Supervised Clinic**

The on-campus Teaching Clinic provides students with an 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 participate in externships in which they interact with student athletes and medical teams under faculty supervision. **Prerequisites:** Satisfactory completion of Clinical Education 1. Note: Faculty-supervised Massage Events associated with working on the general public prior to the completion of CLED 1 and which have been approved by the Program Director will count towards CLED 3. Where such events take place outside The Soma Institute, students must cover their own travel expenses. *(70 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 lecture & 5 lab)*

### **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. *(20 clock hours, 8 lecture & 12 lab)*

### **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. *(20 clock hours, 8 lecture & 12 lab)*

### **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. *(20 clock hours, 8 lecture & 12 lab)*

### **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. *(60 clock hours, 18 lecture & 42 lab)*

### **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. (80 clock hours, 24 lecture & 56 lab)

### **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. (20 clock hours, 6 lecture & 14 lab)

### **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. (50 clock hours, 25 lecture & 25 lab)

### **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. (30 clock hours, 8 lecture & 22 lab)

### **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. (30 clock hours, 8 lecture & 22 lab)

### **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. (20 clock hours, 5 lecture & 15 lab)

### **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. (40 clock hours, 20 lecture & 20 lab)

### **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. (40 clock hours, 20 lecture & 20 lab)



### **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. *(30 clock hours, 15 lecture & 15 lab)*

### **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. *(30 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. *(20 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. *(20 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. *(40 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. *(10 clock hours, all lecture)*



**Disclosures**

**Addendum to July 2019 Day Enrollment Agreement Clock Hour Transfer In Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma Program  
Statement of Data required by the Private Business and Vocational Schools Act (2012 Section 1095.240 Disclosures)**

Reporting Period July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018 CMT CMT Program Outcomes	Number/ Per Cent
Number of students enrolled in Clinical Massage Therapy Program (192 Students Enrolled at 7/1/17 PLUS 222 New Starts, 7 Re-enrollments, 6 Transfers In through 6/30/2018)	427
Withdrawal rate = Percentage of enrolled students not completing course of instruction during reporting period - (Withdrawals 79 & 0 Transfers Out/427 enrollments)	18.5%
Completion/Graduation Rate = Number of students who Completed or Graduated in the Reporting Period (145) divided by Number of Students Scheduled to Complete/Graduate in the Period (176)	82.4%
Number of graduates available for placement assistance by the school (144 graduates less 14 not available for placement due to personal reasons)	130
Percentage of Graduates available for Placement who were placed in a related field (0), outside the field (0), in the field (114/130) 69 through Placement Assistance plus 45 self-placed = 114, not employed (16).	87.7%
Percentage of students who Passed the State Licensing Examination/Professional Certification out of 133 who took exam (110/133) in the reporting period	82.7%
Average starting salary for all graduates employed as employees, independent contractors, and in private practice	\$25-35/hour

**F. Student Services**

To help bring out a student’s best, Soma offers a comprehensive student support program.

**Academic Tutoring**

Soma tutors help develop effective note-taking, time management, study skills, and test-taking strategies. Open tutoring is an important part of the Soma experience. Private tutoring is available to students who are experiencing difficulty making Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements. Appointments can be scheduled through Student Services. There is no fee for tutoring services.

**Counseling Referral Services**

A professional counselor is available, by appointment, to assist students in achieving their educational objectives and resolving personal problems that may interfere with academic success. Individual and occasional group counseling sessions allow students to discuss, in complete confidence, personal or academic issues. When deemed appropriate, students may also be referred to outside professional and community services. There is no fee for this service.

**Lunch Time Lecture Series**

Soma has developed an ongoing program that brings in professionals in the field to speak about their experiences and recommendations for new graduates entering the massage therapy field.



## Teaching Clinic

Soma emphasizes the importance of self care. All students are therefore encouraged to regularly use the on-campus Teaching Clinic. Students must bring their own linens. There is no fee for this service. However, if students do not bring their own linens, they will be charged the normal clinic rate. Those who miss appointments without giving proper (24 hour) notice may lose their clinic privileges.

## Course Evaluations

Evaluations are conducted at the end of each course. It represents students' ratings of the courses and their instructors. The survey is anonymous and is not returned to the instructors until grades for the courses have been released. The evaluations are taken very seriously and curricular 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. Auditors are not permitted to submit written or oral assignments or to take tests and examinations. They do not receive academic or attendance credit. Laboratory classes are subject to space availability and participation in laboratory classes is at the sole discretion of the Instructor. No tuition is charged for course audits.

## YouTube Tutorial Videos

Soma has created a variety of instructional videos. For details and to view the channel visit [www.soma.edu](http://www.soma.edu).

## 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 28, including the payment of all tuition fees and any incidental administrative charges due to the School, are not eligible for graduation and therefore will not be able to walk with their class.

## **Temporary Diplomas**

Temporary diplomas are normally awarded to qualified graduates in advance of graduation ceremonies in order to facilitate the state licensing process. Official diplomas are awarded at graduation.

## **G. 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. In 2016, Soma reported an 81.4% placement rate to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The Soma Institute cannot, however, make any guarantee with regard to placement. 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 in the development of effective marketing strategies to help build clientele
- assisting with local, state and nation-wide regulations and licensing

There is no fee for career services.

## **Illinois State Licensing**

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).

Graduates, may also elect to audit courses in the Clinical Massage Therapy Diploma program. There is a \$25 registration fee for each audited course.



# 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) minimally show satisfactory completion of secondary education or the General Education Development (GED) examination by providing an official high school transcript from a recognized high school, a copy of the GED certificate, or a statement signed by the applicant that attests to graduation and includes the date of graduation, name, address, and telephone number of the high school last attended. If you wish to seek GED certification, you are advised to contact agencies offering state approved testing and certification in your location.

## 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 felony (and misdemeanors) 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.

## 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.

## International Students

International students must have a completed I-20M/N form to enter the country and/or attend classes. To obtain the I-20M/N form, international students must meet the following conditions:

- Demonstrate proficiency in English during the admissions interview and by written documentation, such as a passing score of 500 or better on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- Provide proof of completion of the equivalent of a high school education in the United States. English translations of transcripts, certificates, or other evidence of completion of high school or a more advanced program are acceptable. These documents must be in a student's file before classes begin.
- Show proof of the availability of funds for tuition and fees, as well as living expenses for the duration of the time the student will reside in the United States. Bank statements from the student or sponsor and statements of scholarship may be used to demonstrate financial ability.



## **The Application Process**

Prospective students can obtain an application by contacting Soma or by visiting our website at [www.soma.edu](http://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. Applicants who live out of state and/or more than 50 miles from the School may choose to be interviewed by telephone.

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 CMT1, CA1, CA2, PHYS1, PHYS2, KINES1 or KINES2 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. Those students may not reapply until six months from their dismissal date. 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 80 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. 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.

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$25. 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 one Soma uniform polo shirts for Clinical Education, 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 fingerprinting, and the Illinois State licensing fee.

Students can anticipate spending approximately \$180 on books, linens, and supplies not provided by the school. Purchase of a massage table is not required to participate in the program.

Students will pay tuition in full or any balance due after application of Federal Financial Aid through Education Loan Services, Inc. TuitionFlex® Payment Plans. For details on this affordable, non-interest bearing 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.

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:
  - 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.
  - Stafford Loan (Unsubsidized) – not a need-based loan and interest is charged from the date the loan is disbursed.
  - 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, sign a statement regarding Selective Service registration status (if applicable), attend regularly, and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

**(b) The Soma Institute Payment Plan**

For details on this affordable, non-interest-bearing 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.

**(d) Department of Defense Tuition Assistance (TA) Program**

The School is authorized to participate in this program for Army soldiers. Contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

**(e) Americorps Vouchers**

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

**(f) 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.



# 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.

All students are required to sign in and out after hours. 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.

### 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 with email 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.



### **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 post a telephone message on 312.939.2723 if a decision has been made to close the School. Soma is obligated to reschedule any canceled classes.

### **Lockers**

All Soma students receive a small locker to store linens and books. Soma is not responsible for any articles damaged, destroyed, lost, or missing from the lockers, including contents removed and disposed of after locks are cut off. Students who have completed all course work and Clinical Education rotations are required to vacate their locker space on or before the day of final comprehensive examinations. Locks will be cut immediately thereafter and the contents thrown away. Because of the number of students who require lockers each term, there can be no exceptions to this policy.

### **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 312.878.4224. Cards may be replaced for a \$20 fee. Found cards should be returned or mailed to The Soma Institute.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is prohibited in any enclosed School facility and externship site (including but not limited to common work areas, classrooms, lunch rooms, private offices, hallways, stairways, and restrooms) and in any designated outdoor area.

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are strictly prohibited in any enclosed school facility (including but not limited to common work areas, classrooms, lunch rooms, private offices, hallways, stairways, and restrooms).

Any individual who believes the policy is being violated should discuss the situation with the alleged violator and then, if necessary, with a supervisor, with the host of a visitor who allegedly violates the policy, or with the Vice-President Operations who is also responsible for compliance with this policy.



## **Teaching Clinic and Student Clients**

In order to qualify for complimentary treatments in the Teaching Clinic, students must bring their own linens. Failure to do so will result in paying the regular clinic charge. Students must also attend the scheduled appointment unless they give notice of cancellation 24 hours in advance. This policy, which is designed to encourage collegial professionalism and mutual respect, is strictly monitored and enforced. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the loss of a student's Teaching Clinic participation privileges.

## **Tutoring Policies**

Open tutoring is normally available Monday through Thursday. Check available times with the Front Desk. Students experiencing difficulties with the program may also schedule private tutoring. Private tutoring can be scheduled at the Front Desk, or by calling 312.878.4224. Students should bring specific questions, notes from class, textbooks with relevant pages marked off, and a willingness to work.

If students wish to practice a hands-on technique they should bring sheets, lab clothes and, if possible, come with a classmate. This will give the tutor an opportunity to watch a student's work.

## **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.

## **B. Financial Policies**

### **Delinquent Accounts**

Students who are on a payment plan and fall delinquent may be subject to dismissal upon written notice.

A diploma and academic transcripts will be withheld from any student who has been notified in writing by the School that they are in arrears. The student will be required to pay the account balance in full or bring the tuition payment plan current before the diploma and transcripts are issued. Alumni privileges will be withheld from any graduate whose account has been placed in collections.



## 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.

### Policy of the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET)

#### 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.**

#### 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, or if a prospective international student has his/her visa application rejected, a full refund of all tuition monies paid will be made to the applicant less a maximum application/registration fee of \$200, if such charges are clearly noted in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable
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, less a maximum application/registration fee of \$200, if such charges are clearly noted in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable. The only exception is for an international student recruited from outside the United States or its territories, receives an I-20 from the Institution, enters the country, and subsequently cancels prior to the start of class or is a no-show. In this event, an institution may retain a maximum total of \$500 for any non-refundable charges clearly identified in the enrollment agreement, including any application/registration fee, courier fees, and travel cancellation insurance.

#### Cancellation after the start of class (optional student trial period):

An institution may consider a withdrawal as a cancellation or no show (for example, within the first 15 calendar days of the program schedule) provided this process is fully



delineated in writing as part of the refund policy and provided to all students at or before enrollment. A student who is considered a cancellation or no show under such a policy must have all charges refunded and all payments returned to the individual or the applicable funding source less the maximum allowable application/registration fee of \$200.00, if such charges are clearly noted in the enrollment agreement as being non-refundable.

**Withdrawal or Termination After Start of Class and After the Trial Period: Programs greater than or equal to 300 clock hours or equivalent**

For programs of study that are greater than or equal to 300 clock hours in length, the institution will establish, at a minimum, the following refund policy:

- a. Refund amounts must be based on a student's last date of attendance (LDA). When determining the number of weeks completed by the student, the institution will consider a partial week the same as if a whole week were completed, provided the student was present at least one day during the scheduled week.
- 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.

**NOTE:** The tuition amount to be used in the calculations under (b) and (c) above will be the full tuition of \$14,315.00 regardless of whether it is being paid in full with discount, by loans, and/or by payment plans.

**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., 375 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.

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:

1. Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans/Direct Stafford Loans
2. Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans/Direct Stafford Loans
3. Federal PLUS Loans/Direct PLUS Loans
4. Federal Pell Grant Program
5. Other Federal, State, private or institutional assistance
6. 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 750 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 (375 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 80 per cent of the scheduled clock hours.
- 3. Against Maximum Timeframe:** Overall progress is checked against a maximum timeframe of 125 per cent of the program length, measured in weeks. For day students, the maximum timeframe in which they may successfully complete the program is 60 weeks. For evening/weekend students, maximum time frame is 78 weeks. If it is determined that a student will exceed the maximum timeframe, they will be administratively withdrawn.

### SAP and Incomplete Courses

Incomplete grades are not given.

### SAP 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.

### SAP 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 80 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 timeframe 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 510 hours and therefore must complete 240 hours at the Institute ( $240/16$  hours per week = 15 weeks), the maximum time frame is 15 weeks x 125% or 18.75 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 readmittance.

### **Federal Financial Aid Disbursement Rules**

For those students receiving Federal Financial Aid, 375 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 337.5 clock hours and earned passing grades for courses totaling 375 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 80% monthly attendance average. The minimum acceptable attendance is an 80% attendance rate for completion/graduation.

Attendance is reviewed monthly and students who fail to maintain a minimum of 80% cumulative attendance will be placed on attendance probation for 60 days to provide an opportunity to achieve satisfactory attendance progress. Student progress toward achieving 80% is monitored monthly during the probationary period.

Students who achieve the cumulative 80% 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 80% 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 80% 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 must submit a written appeal within 7 days of the Progress Report distribution. At the end of the month after progress report distribution, the attendance data become permanent and can no longer be challenged.

### **Tardiness and Early Departures**

The Soma Institute expects students to be in class on time every day. 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 on the attendance sheets. They are calculated into the attendance percentage based on the following credit scheme:

Late or leave early (up to 15 minutes):

- receive credit for 75% of clock hours

Extra late (15 minutes or more up to 50 minutes):

- receive credit for 50% of clock hours

Leave early (after 50 minutes):

- receive credit for 50% of clock hours

Leave early (before 50 minutes):

- receive no clock hour credit

### **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 calendar days in one calendar year, or one-half the published program length, whichever is shorter.  
The student must sign and date the leave of absence request, specify a reason for the leave, and provide supporting documentation.
- (iii) The student must attest to understanding the procedures and implications for returning to their course of study.
- (iv) Students receiving Federal Financial Aid may need to meet with the Financial Aid Office prior to being granted a leave of absence, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so, and upon their return from the approved leave.



- (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.
- (vi) A student who is not in class on their scheduled return date will be withdrawn from the School.

**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, and 80% attendance for each course.

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 be permitted to make the test up. In classes that have more than one test, quiz or in-class assignment students will be permitted to drop the lowest score before the final grade is tallied.

##### **Clinical Education 1: Competency Clinics**

If a student does not attend the Clinical Education 1 competency clinic exam they will receive a grade of F. The student will be given one opportunity to take the exam at the next available testing time. If the student fails to show up for the exam or earns below a 70% on the exam then they fail the course and must repeat the course the next time it is offered.

If a student earns below a 70% on the competency test, they will be allowed one chance to retake the exam at the next available testing time. If, on their second test, the student earns below a 70% on the exam then they fail the course and must repeat the course the next time it is offered.

##### **Missed Classes**

Students, at the discretion of the President, may be permitted to make up hours for absences only. Makeup classes must be comparable to the content, time, and delivery of the classes missed. Make-up hours cannot exceed 10% of the total program hours.

#### **(e) Failed Coursework**

A student who fails a course will receive a grade of “F” and will 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 within 30 calendar days of the issuance of the tuition due notice is required or the account will be referred to an outside collection agency.

## **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 80 per cent of the scheduled 750 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, Telephone, 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 who is in good academic and financial standing receives two official academic transcripts at the completion of the course of study. Additional transcripts may be requested in writing. Students who have withdrawn and are in good financial standing may request a transcript in writing.

**Classroom and Clinical Education Standards**

**(a) Class Participation Policy**

Clinical massage therapy is a skill acquired through supervised practice and instruction. Students, therefore, are expected to participate in every class. Students may not stay in class when they are unable to participate. The attendance requirement for graduation applies to all absences due to non-participation.

Students, at their sole discretion, may refuse to act as a client in laboratory classes. They will, however, have to work as a therapist and are subject to the Class Participation Policy.

**(b) Professional Dress Code**

Students are expected to maintain a neat and well groomed appearance during all activities associated with the Clinical Massage Therapy Program. A student’s appearance must not distract from the professional image the School promotes, nor should it attract undue attention from those around. Accordingly, hats, hoods, etc. may not be worn.

**(c) Professional Hygiene in Laboratory Classes and Clinics**

Proper grooming and personal hygiene are important characteristics for professionals and students alike. It is, therefore, imperative that students observe the following standards: breath should be fresh; body odors should be pleasant; perfumes, colognes, or body sprays may not be worn; clothing should be free of smoke and other offensive odors; facial hair, if kept, should be neatly trimmed; fingernails must be short and free of nail polish; rings on fingers, watches or bracelets on wrists, and long necklaces and earrings are inappropriate.





**(d) Professional Dress Code in Laboratory Classes**

For laboratory classes, students are required to wear athletic shorts and a plain crewneck T-shirt or Soma T-shirt. Women may be required to wear a sports bra. No sandals, high heels, open-toed or open-heeled shoes are to be worn. Athletic shoes are strongly recommended.

**(e) Professional Dress Code in Clinical Education 1, 2 and 3**

For all Clinical Education classes, clothing is expected to be clean, wrinkle free, and void of holes or frayed edges. Students must wear a Soma-issued polo shirt. They must also wear long pants, worn no lower than waist high. Jeans, excessively tight or baggy pants, bell bottoms, capris, shorts and sweat pants are not permitted. Tennis or athletic-type shoes must also be worn. Facial jewelry is strictly forbidden. Hats, hoods, scarfs, bandanas or any other head coverings are not to be worn indoors. Students not following the clothing, uniform, and hygiene guidelines will be dismissed from the clinical education rotation.

**(f) Laboratory Classroom Hygiene**

In order to provide a clean and hygienic learning environment, food and drink are not permitted in any laboratory classroom. Water, however, is allowed in laboratory classrooms in clear, closable containers.

**(g) 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.

**(h) 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.

**(i) 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.

**(j) Cell Phones, iPods, MP3 Players, PDA's and Pagers**

Cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, PDA's and pagers must be turned off during scheduled classes. Ringing and buzzing electronic devices are a distraction to students and instructors, and disrupt the learning process. Students in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from class. Moreover, if a student is found with an electronic device that is not turned off or if a device rings during an examination, the student will receive a zero for the examination.



**(k) Recording Devices in Class**

Students may make voice recordings of science and laboratory classroom sessions. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of students, videotaping and still photography of classes by students is strictly prohibited.

**(l) 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.

**(m) 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.

**(n) Scantron Test Grading**

All written tests normally use Scantron answer sheets and they 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 done and recorded, using a No. 2 pencil, and that changed answers are completely erased. Failing to comply with these instructions will invalidate test results. Damaged, discolored, creased, folded or mutilated, Scantron answer sheets will be rejected. Photocopies or facsimiles are also not acceptable.

**(o) 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.



- Both the accuser and the accused may have an adviser with them at the hearing. The 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.

## **Policy on Sex Discrimination**

### **(a) 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 Soma Institute has designated the President as responsible for coordinating its efforts to comply with and carry out this policy, which is consistent with *Title IX of the Federal Educational Amendments of 1972*. In addition, the School has adopted a grievance procedure for students who believe they have been subjected to sex discrimination.

Any student enrolled in the program is eligible to bring a grievance.

### **(b) Grievance Procedure**

A grievance is a complaint stating that The Soma Institute or its employees have discriminated on the basis of sex in any of the following areas: admissions; access to programs and courses; access to School facilities; counseling; graduation requirements; student rules, regulations, and benefits; financial assistance; and most other aid, benefits, or services.

**Step One:** The student will meet with the Title IX grievance counselor and state the grievance. Grievances must be presented within 10 calendar days of the occasion of the grievance. If he or she wishes, the grievant may have any advisor present throughout the grievance process. Either the grievant or the advisor, or both, may discuss the grievance with the counselor. The counselor will initiate further discussion between the grievant and the party against whom the grievance is being brought (the respondent), in the hope of resolving the grievance at this point.

**Step Two:** If the grievance is not settled within 10 calendar days between the grievant and the respondent, the grievant and his or her advisor will prepare promptly and present to the respondent a written Notice of Grievance. Copies of the Notice of Grievance will be sent by the grievant to the President of the School.

The Notice of Grievance should contain:

- The matter of the original grievance;
- The action taken by the respondent; and
- The remedy or correction sought.





The counselor will initiate discussions with the respondent to make every effort to settle the grievance with the grievant and his or her advisor by a settlement agreement signed by all parties. Should a settlement agreement be agreed to by the grievant and the respondent, a written copy of the agreement will be forwarded by the counselor to the President. If such an agreement is not reached within 10 calendar days after the presentation of the Notice of Grievance, or within a mutually agreed upon further extension of time, the third step will be taken.

Step Three: If the grievance is not settled at the second step, the counselor will promptly establish a Review Committee of three members, with the President serving as a permanent member of the committee. The other members one from Faculty/Staff and one from Students, will be selected from a list of volunteers.

The Review Committee will conduct a hearing or hearings. At these hearings, it is the right of the grievant and/or the respondent to be represented by an attorney or otherwise, to call witnesses, and to cross-examine witnesses.

Within 10 calendar days and after the conclusion of the hearing(s), the committee will submit three copies of written recommendations: one copy to the grievant, one to the respondent, and one to be retained on permanent record by the Title IX grievance counselor.

Within 10 calendar days after receipt of the Review Committee's recommendations, the President will notify all parties in writing of the disposition of the grievance. If not contrary to applicable law or regulations, the decision of the President will be final.

If either the grievant or the respondent feels, after a reasonable amount of time, that the terms of the settlement or other disposition are not being adhered to, then the matter may be discussed with the Title IX grievance counselor, who in turn will bring it to the attention of the President.

## **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**

#### **(i) Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment can take a variety of forms, ranging from subtle pressure to engage in sexual activity to verbal abuse to physical assault. While most sexual harassment involves a male harassing a female, sexual harassment may also involve persons of the same sex or a female harassing a male.

Sexual harassment by students, faculty or staff may involve an explicit or implicit threat of submitting to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is an expected or required term or condition of an individual's employment, advancement, or academic success. It may also include a tangible adverse job or academic action, such as a significant change in employment or academic status or benefits.



More generally, sexual harassment occurs whenever unsolicited and unwanted conduct of a sexual nature creates a hostile or offensive work or learning environment, unreasonably interferes with the person's work or academic performance or otherwise adversely affects the person's employment or academic opportunities. The following are examples of behaviors that may be considered sexual harassment. None of these behaviors will be tolerated at The Soma Institute:

- *Unwanted physical contact or touching of a sexual nature, including "accidental" brushing against someone*
- *Unwanted flirtations, persistent requests for dates, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or propositions*
- *Sexual gestures or verbal abuse, including offensive jokes, sexual innuendoes, degrading language*
- *Repeated unwanted compliments about appearance or dress*
- *Sexually suggestive photographs, drawings, graffiti and computer-related visual materials, including screen savers and Internet graphics*
- *Sexually offensive letters, voice mail messages, calls, memoranda, e-mails*
- *Describing sexual exploits, questioning others about their sexual life or activities*

(ii) Other Types of Harassment

Harassment other than sexual 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 counselling 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 reoccurrence. 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 must comply with the following standards of conduct related to alcohol and controlled substances:

Students and employees are expressly prohibited from possessing, using or distributing illegal drugs and from the unlawful use of alcohol (e.g. consuming alcohol when under the legal drinking age of 21, serving alcohol to minors) on any School property or as part of any School activity. If a student or employee is found to be selling illegal drugs or selling or distributing alcohol unlawfully on School property or at School-sponsored activities, the person will be terminated from enrollment or employment and the activities reported to local police.

Students and employees may not be on School property in a drunken condition or under the influence of illegal substances. 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 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 within ten working days after receiving notice of the employee’s conviction.



**(c) Counselling Resources**

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

- Alcohol Abuse and Crisis Intervention . . . . . 1.800.234.0246
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Helpline and Treatment . . . . . 1.800.234.0420
- Alcoholics Anonymous Greater Chicago and Chicago . . . . . 1.800.371.1475
- Narcotics Anonymous - The Chicagoland 24 Hour Helpline . . . . . 1.708.848.4884

**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 a written complaint with one of the School’s two regulatory agencies. Please direct all such inquiries to:

Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET)  
 Complaint Administrator  
 1722 N. Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C., 20036  
 Telephone: 202.955.1113  
 www.accet.org

OR

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

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



## Administration

### President & Founder

Joan L. Hannant  
[joanhannant@soma.edu](mailto:joanhannant@soma.edu)

### Vice-President, Admissions & Marketing

Stanley Kozik, B.A.  
[stanleykozik@soma.edu](mailto:stanleykozik@soma.edu)

### Vice-President, Operations & Financial Aid

James Cussen, B.B.A.  
[jcussen@soma.edu](mailto:jcussen@soma.edu)

### Vice-President, Business Office

Helen J. Robinson, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.  
[hrobinson@soma.edu](mailto:hrobinson@soma.edu)

### Program Director,

Michael A. Hovi, B.S.E., L.M.T.  
[mhovi@soma.edu](mailto:mhovi@soma.edu)

### Student Records Director

Tilda M. Williams  
[twilliams@soma.edu](mailto:twilliams@soma.edu)

### Career Services

Katharine Tafel, B.A., Certified Health and Wellness Coach  
[ktafel@soma.edu](mailto:ktafel@soma.edu)

### Admissions

Brooke Chothen, D.I.P., C.M.T.  
[bchothen@soma.edu](mailto:bchothen@soma.edu)

Naomi Griffin, DIP., C.M.T.  
[ngriffin@soma.edu](mailto:ngriffin@soma.edu)

### Administrative Assistant

Lissette Macias  
[lmacias@soma.edu](mailto:lmacias@soma.edu)



# Faculty

## Instructors

**Sandra Alexandria**, D.C., DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Abbey Breckling**, M.S., B.S., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Nitza Cancel**, B.A., DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Stephen Cogar**, B.A., DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Krystal Haley**, DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Michael A. Hovi**, B.S.E., L.M.T.  
**Janis Kim**, M.P.T., P.R.N.  
**Christopher MacLeish**, B.Kin, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T  
**Francis Jean Nguyen**, B.A., DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Bethann Olsavsky**, B.A., DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Jill Leary**, B.S.,R.D., DIP, C.M.T  
**Deborah Piegza**, A.A., DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Mark Salas**, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Alejandro Salinas**, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Dewana Smith**, A.A., DIP, C.M.T., N.C.T.M.B., L.M.T.  
**Julio Vaez**, B.A., D.C.  
**Michele Zambardino**, D.O., DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.

## Teaching Assistants

**Kayla Hancock**, DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Stephen Kelly**, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Erica Mortenson**, DIP., C.M.T., L.M.T.

## Tutors

**Stephen Kelly**, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T.  
**Alexis Bonaparte**, DIP, C.M.T., L.M.T. **Kavalpreet Mathon**, DIP, C.M.T, L.M.T



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55 East Jackson Boulevard • Suite 300 • Chicago, IL 60604-4110

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