

OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARD

Massage Therapist, EstQF Level 6

An occupational qualification standard is a document which describes the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes, i.e. competence requirements, needed to successfully accomplish duties. Occupational qualification standards are used for compiling curricula and awarding qualifications.

Occupational title	Level of Estonian Qualifications Framework (EstQF)
Massage Therapist, EstQF Level 6	6

Possible specialisation and titles on occupational certificate	
Specialisation	Title on occupational qualification certificate
Paediatric massage therapy	Paediatric Massage Therapist, Level 6
Sports massage therapy	Sports Massage Therapist, Level 6
Therapeutic massage therapy	Therapeutic Massage Therapist, Level 6

Part A DESCRIPTION OF WORK

<p>A.1 Description of work</p> <p>The job of a massage therapist is to restore the affected functions of the client's/patient's body and prevent and alleviate health problems in the best possible way, supporting the client's/patient's quality of life.</p> <p>The massage therapist prepares the workplace, establishes contact with the client, collects their history and gives a massage using correct and appropriate massage techniques. They advise and instruct clients and refer them to health care specialists, where needed.</p> <p>The job of a paediatric massage therapist is to give massages to children of all ages, taking into consideration each child's age and health. They usually form part of a rehabilitation team and must adequately assess their role when working independently or with parents/caregivers, paediatricians, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists or other specialists. They advise and instruct children and parents and refer them onwards to other specialists, where needed.</p> <p>A sports massage therapist usually works alone or as part of a team consisting of an individual athlete and/or team, a coach, a sports physician and a physiotherapist. Their role is to use massage to help athletes to achieve a steady rise in their training levels and maximum performance, and to maintain a timed peak performance. Through their work, sports massage therapists influence the functional state of athletes' bodies by promoting post-workout recovery processes to prevent fatigue, trauma and musculoskeletal overload.</p> <p>The work of a therapeutic massage therapist is to perform a massage based on the client's diagnosis or condition in order to relieve symptoms and support basic treatment. They monitor the client's/patient's recovery and doctor's advice, collaborate with physicians/physiotherapists/rehabilitation physicians, modify the therapy plan, where needed, and advise clients/patients regarding therapeutic massage.</p> <p>There is also an occupational qualification standard for Masseur, EstQF Level 5.</p>
<p>A.2 Tasks</p> <p>A.2.1 Customer service, service and introduction of products</p> <p>1. Customer service.</p>

2. Introducing services and products.

A.2.2 Massage therapy and supporting activities

1. Preparing and organising the workplace and tools.
2. Collecting the client's medical history and assessing their situation; preparation for the massage.
3. Choosing the type of massage and preparing for it.
4. Performing massage therapy.
5. Ending massage therapy.
6. Evaluation of results.

A.2.3 Massage business

1. Choosing a form of business and planning activities.
2. Managing a salon.
3. Planning marketing and sales campaigns.
4. Leading a team.
5. Supervising colleagues.

Specialised areas of work

Paediatric massage therapy

A.2.4 Paediatric massage therapy

1. Preparing the massage room.
2. Establishing rapport.
3. Collecting information.
4. Giving paediatric massages.
5. Giving instructions.

Sports massage therapy

A.2.5 Sports massage therapy

1. Assessment of joint mobility and muscle strength; interpretation of results.
2. Massage during training period.
3. Massage during competition period.
4. Preventing sports injuries.

Therapeutic massage therapy

A.2.6 Therapeutic massage therapy

1. Collecting medical history and compiling a therapy plan.
2. Giving therapeutic massages.
3. Evaluating the results of therapeutic massages.

A.3 Work environment and specific nature of work

The work environment of the massage therapist must be ergonomic, clean, well lit, ventilated and warm. The specific nature of the work of a massage therapist involves direct contact with the client's body. This results in a delicate situation in which the client must feel safe and comfortable. The massage therapist works in educational, health care or social facilities or in private practice.

A paediatric massage therapist must take into account the particularities of the child's developmental stages when furnishing their office. A sports massage therapist works in sports or health clubs. They work with athletes individually or as part of a team.

A therapeutic massage therapist works independently or in teams, in hospitals or rehabilitation centres.

A.4 Tools

A massage therapist mostly uses massage tables, massage mats, pillows, blankets, sheets, oils, cleaning products, etc. Various colours, scents, sounds and lighting are used to set the mood.

A.5 Personal qualities required for work: abilities and characteristics

The job of a massage therapist requires physical capability and analytical, synthesis and service skills. A massage therapist is empathetic, trustworthy, cooperative, adaptable, creative, attentive, delicate and with high tolerance physical and mental stress.

A.6 Professional preparation

A massage therapist usually has secondary education and has completed professional training in addition to work experience.

A.7 Most common occupational titles

Massage therapist, paediatric massage therapist, sports massage therapist, therapeutic massage therapist.

Part B COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

B.1 Structure of occupation

Mandatory competences B.2.1-B.2.3 and recurring competence B.2.7 must be certified when applying for the qualification of Massage Therapist, Level 6. In addition to mandatory competences, the following competencies must be certified when specialising:
 paediatric massage therapist – competence B.2.4,
 sports massage therapist – competence B.2.5,
 therapeutic massage therapist – competence B.2.6.

B.2 Competences

MANDATORY COMPETENCES

B.2.1 Customer service and introducing services and products

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. welcomes the client, introduces themselves and the massage procedure they will be performing; creates a secure environment for the client; asks for feedback on the client's well-being and satisfaction after the massage; recommends subsequent massage sessions or other services to the client based on the client's needs and wishes; settles any potential misunderstandings in a sensitive way;
2. introduces the services and products used to the customer, describing the content and purpose of the chosen services and products; refers onwards to a product specialist, where necessary.

B.2.2 Massage therapy and supporting activities

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. prepares the massage room, tools and equipment in accordance with the health and ergonomic requirements of the room; prepares the workspace according to the type of massage; maintains the workplace in line with occupational safety, ergonomic and hygiene requirements; arranges the room before and after the massage session;
2. identifies the reason for the appointment and the expectations and potential health risks to the client based on knowledge of the human body's construction and function, pathologies, the biomechanics of the musculoskeletal system and the principles of motor control and functional anatomy, using appropriate methods, including manual muscle testing; assesses the physiological cycle and joint activity during gait cycle phases based on muscle tone regulation; collects information using a medical history questionnaire, information given by the client's doctor and/or interviews with the client; prepares the client based on the specific nature of the chosen massage;
3. develops a massage therapy plan using influencing methods (e.g. stretching and mobilisation) and tools, taking into account the client's wishes, indications and contraindications; explains the chosen approach to the client and recommends other options or referral to a health care specialist in the case of health risks; selects appropriate techniques (e.g. tempo, rhythm and strength), tools (e.g. oils, creams and cups) and session design; informs the client of the direct and indirect effects of the massage;
4. performs massage/therapy (classic, sports, segment, lymphatic, aroma, workplace, paediatric and reflective massage/massage therapy) based on the medical history and clinical findings, adjusting the massage plan where necessary, given the nature of the changes that have occurred; interacts with the client for feedback, applies ergonomic techniques, assists the client in changing their body position, uses assistive and gymnastic equipment as needed; ensures the client's privacy when dressing and during the massage;

5. informs the client of the end of the massage session and possible orthostatic reaction (risk of falling), where necessary assisting the client in getting off the massage table/mat; informs the client of possible physical and psychological changes to the body after the massage (e.g. muscle pain, drowsiness and headache); gives recommendations for post-massage activities and, where necessary, advises the client to consult a health care professional and/or physiotherapist;

6. evaluates the results of the massage using appropriate assessment methods (e.g. assessing joint and fascia mobility and skin colour) based on the goals set and the techniques and tools used.

B.2.3 Massage business

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. evaluates business opportunities based on the objectives of their operations; selects the most suitable form of enterprise; manages their activities taking professional information, legislation and the basics of small enterprises into account;
2. prices services based on operating costs and the market situation; prepares a salon budget based on expenses and revenue; adheres to budget implementation; organises the purchasing of the necessary products and consumables; manages the customer base in compliance with legislation;
3. prepares sales and marketing campaigns based on the concept of the salon; puts together loyalty programmes;
4. manages team work; draws up work and holiday schedules based on legislation and the needs of the salon; engages salon staff in development activities;
5. advises and supervises colleagues with less experience, including interns, and provides assistance in resolving problems; monitors and provides feedback on the work of a trainee; identifies the training needs of staff and organises staff training.

COMPETENCES RELATED TO SPECIALISATION

In addition to mandatory competences, the following competencies must be certified when specialising:

paediatric massage therapist – competence B.2.4,

sports massage therapist – competence B.2.5,

therapeutic massage therapist – competence B.2.6.

Paediatric massage therapy

B.2.4 Paediatric massage therapy

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. prepares the massage room, taking into account the child's development (e.g. using age-appropriate toys for catching attention, tools to clean them with and secure storage for the tools);
2. establishes rapport with the child and their parents/caregivers taking into account the special needs of the child regarding their age and development;
3. collects information about the child's condition through observation and manual (reflex) testing; if necessary, uses instructions from the child's physician and/or interviews the client;
4. selects the type and techniques of massage therapy, taking into account the special needs of the child regarding their age and development; performs massage therapy;
5. if necessary, provides guidance and counselling to the client when applying massage techniques and/or doing physical exercises using appropriate methods.

Knowledge:

- 1) child's functional anatomy and physiology;
- 2) common childhood diseases;
- 3) characteristics of paediatric rehabilitation and therapeutic exercises.

Sports massage therapy

B.2.5 Sports massage therapy

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. measures joint mobility manually or using a goniometer and measures muscle force using a myometer; analyses the results and explains them to the client;

2. performs a sports massage that supports the training process using different sports massage techniques and methods, as needed (muscle maintenance massage); selects the appropriate sports-specific oil, cream or ointment;
 3. applies various methods to regulate athletes' physical fitness, taking into account the client's physical and mental condition, age and gender characteristics; performs massages before, during and after competitions based on the specific nature of the sport and the overall structure of the training process;
 4. providing first aid for sports injuries (RICE method), working with a physician and physiotherapist; uses supports (splints and orthoses) where necessary;
 5. prevents sports injuries by applying appropriate techniques and methods (e.g. contract-relax stretching, PIR, mobilisation and immobilisation); uses taping where necessary.

Knowledge:

- 1) sports physiology;
- 2) basics of athletic training (structure and mechanisms of training);
- 3) the role of sports massage in the training process;
- 4) conditions, diseases and sports injuries related to musculoskeletal overload;
- 5) physical treatment options (e.g. electrotherapy, magnetic stimulation and thermo-treatment);
- 6) sport biomechanics and sport kinesiology;
- 7) the role of physical exercise, including exercises related to health risks;
- 8) manual therapy of soft tissue (stretch therapy, trigger point therapy and myofascial techniques).

Therapeutic massage therapy

B.2.6 Therapeutic massage therapy

EstQF Level 6

Performance indicators:

1. selects the appropriate type of massage therapy and draws up a therapy plan based on the medical diagnosis;
2. performing therapeutic massages according to the therapy plan;
3. evaluates the results of therapeutic massages to determine the dynamics using different rating scales (e.g. extent of joint mobility, state of swelling, pain scale and general well-being).

Knowledge:

- 1) segment massage;
- 2) lymph massage;
- 3) connective tissue massage;
- 4) massages for neurological diseases;
- 5) massages for musculoskeletal diseases;
- 6) manual therapy of soft tissue (stretch therapy, trigger point therapy and myofascial techniques).

RECURRING COMPETENCES

B.2.7 Recurring competences of Massage Therapist

EstQF Level 5

Performance indicators:

1. uses professional terminology, expressing themselves clearly and comprehensibly;
2. acts in accordance with professional ethics in their work;
3. follows occupational safety and hygiene requirements;
4. documents their actions and ensures the confidentiality of data;
5. uses Estonian in their work at the B1 level and one foreign language at the A1 level (Annex 1);
6. continues professional training and is aware of evidence-based developments in the speciality;
7. provides first aid, where necessary;
8. has knowledge of the philosophical aspects of branches of Eastern medicine (Tibetan, Ayurvedic, Japanese, Thai and Chinese) and of the most common types of massage arising from these branches;
9. is proficient in the use of the standard office software needed for the job; finds the information needed for their work online and critically assesses its reliability; maintains electronic correspondence; ensures the safety of electronic data.

Assessment methods:

Recurring competences are evaluated as part of the assessment of the other competences listed in the occupational qualification standard.

Part C GENERAL INFORMATION AND ANNEXES

C.1 Information concerning compilation and certification of occupational qualification standard and reference to classification of occupations	
1. ID of occupational qualification standard in register of occupational qualifications	23-23032023-2.5/10k
2. Occupational qualification standard compiled by:	Inna Alps, Vihula mõis Anne Ast, Eesti Spaaliit Martin Ilves, Eesti Massaaži- ja Teraapiakool Alar Krautman, Krautmani Massaaži- ja Terviseakadeemia Katrín Kõre, Eesti Füsioterapeutide Liit Mai-Liis Pille, Eesti Massööride Liit Marit Salus, Tartu Tervishoiu Kõrgkool Helvis Trääder, Fysiopark OÜ
3. Occupational qualification standard approved by:	Health
4. No. of decision of Sectoral Council	31
5. Date of decision of Sectoral Council	23.03.2023
6. Occupational qualification standard valid until	15.11.2023
7. Occupational qualification standard version no.	10
8. Reference to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08)	3255 Physiotherapy Technicians and Assistants
9. Reference to European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	6
C.2 Occupational title in foreign language	
English:	Massage Therapist, EstQF Level 6
Finnish:	Hieronta terapeutti
Russian:	Массажист-терапевт
C.3 Annexes	
Lisa 1 Language skills level descriptions	