

2010  
ABMP School  
Operations Survey

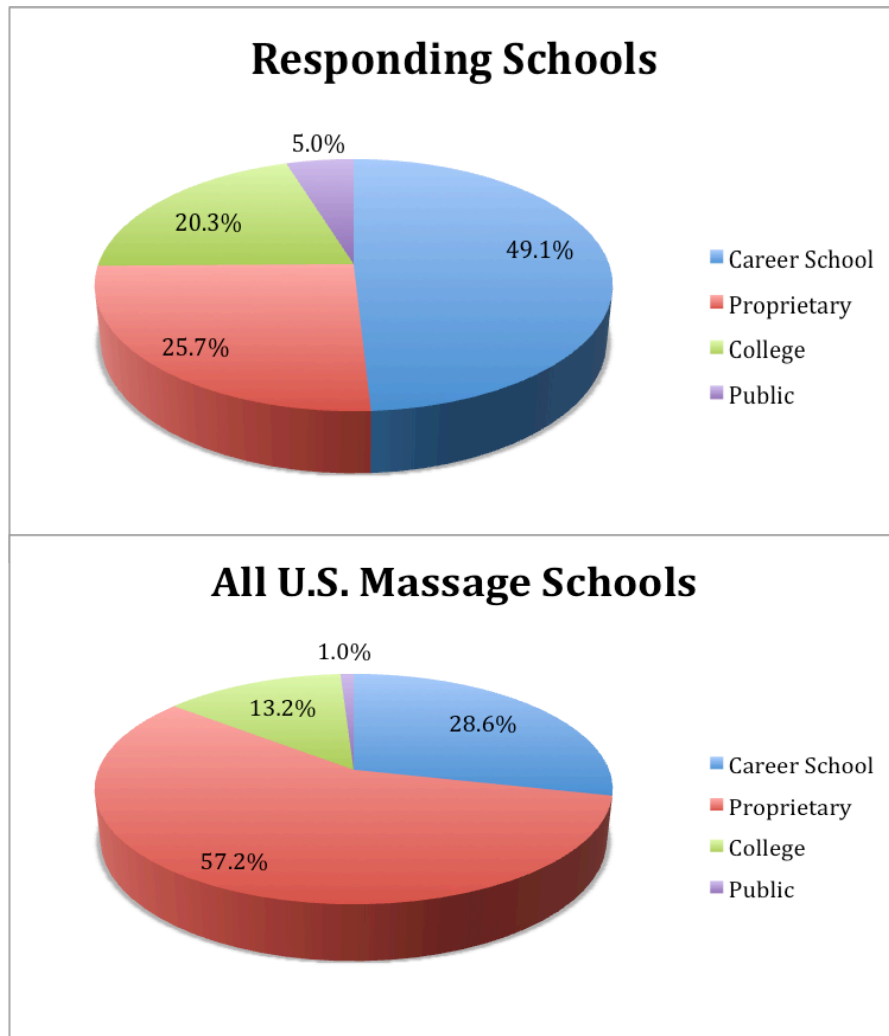
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## Introduction

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) emailed a confidential survey to 1,229 massage, bodywork, and somatic therapy schools in the United States for which ABMP had emails on file and received 253 responses, a 20.6% response rate.

The results of the survey were tabulated and analyzed in October 2010. The Education Department at ABMP believes the results of the survey reflect valuable benchmark data that will assist schools in evaluating how they are performing compared to nationwide information.

The primary focus of the survey was to quantify information regarding massage, bodywork, and somatic therapy schools in the United States. Results from questions that allowed for more open-ended responses are listed based on the frequency of a topic being mentioned. Most responses were quantified through a calculation of mean or average of responses, along with a median or midpoint of responses. Where appropriate, we have compared survey results from previous years to those received this year.



## The Results

**General Ownership Data:** 121 schools (56.8%) indicated they rent their facility. Sixty-eight schools (31.9%) own their facilities, and 24 schools (11.3%) own some space and rent additional space.

**Advisory Committee or Board of Directors:** Of the 208 schools that responded to this question, 148 (71.2%) use an advisory committee or board of directors.

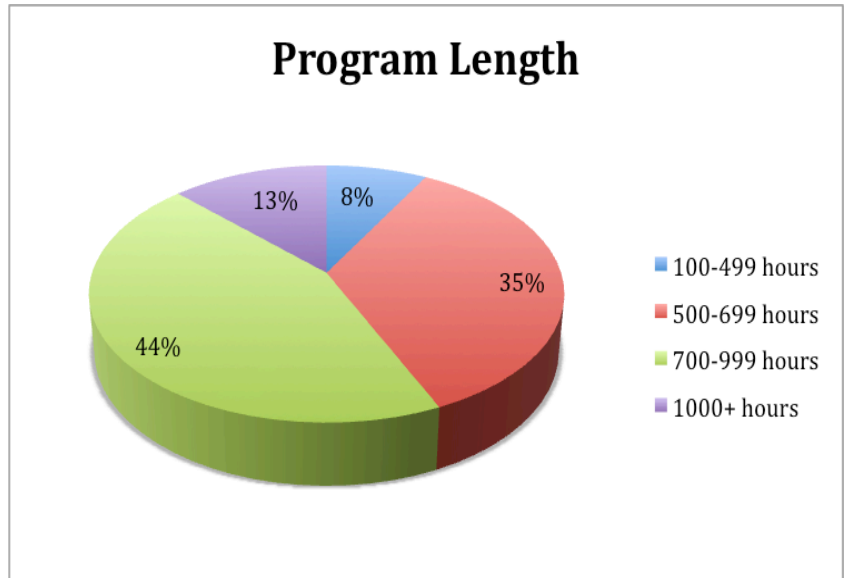
**Accreditation:** The majority of responding schools are accredited (69.9%), with the top accreditation agencies listed as 1) ACICS, 2) ACCSC, and 3) ABHES or COMTA, who tied for third, each accrediting 11 schools. *Note: data of all schools in ABMP's database shows that 55.6% of all schools are accredited by US Department of Education-recognized accrediting agencies.*

**School Marketing:** Consistently over the past six years, schools have indicated the three most successful avenues for marketing their schools are word of mouth, websites, and pay-per-click search listings. More schools are starting to use social media outlets as a way of communication with potential and current students. The most popular site is Facebook (95.5%). Successful avenues for marketing the school as reported by respondents are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Marketing Avenues Used by Respondent Schools**

Description	Percentage	Responses
Word of mouth	92.4%	146
Website	91.8%	145
Pay-per-click	41.8%	66
Yellow pages	40.5%	64
Television	38.0%	60
Newspaper	35.4%	56
Social media	34.8%	55
Radio	32.9%	52
Direct mail	29.7%	47
Trade magazine	28.5%	45

**Program Hours:** Of 224 respondents, 18 schools offered between 100 and 500 hours of instruction (8%), 79 schools offered between 501–700 hours of instruction (35.3%), 99 schools offered between 701 and 1,000 hours of instruction (44.2%), and 28 schools offered more than 1,000 hours of instruction (12.5%).



**Program Structure:** Quarterly programs comprise 41.7% of the schools surveyed. Modular programs were more popular (58.3%), but the majority of schools chose “other” (61.2%) and listed semester, monthly, and individualized programs as the best way to describe program structure.

**Other School Programs:** Out of 251 schools, 161 (64.1%) offered programs other than massage compared to the 56.5% of the respondents surveyed in 2008. The top three programs in terms of enrollment for those offering multiple programs are nursing/medical assistant (96 responses—59.6%), medical billing (26 responses—16.1%), and esthetics (15 responses—9.3%).

**Tuition:** The average tuition cost has increased 107.2% over the last 10 years with an increase of 21.1% in the past two years. This contrasts with the 5.0% increase in tuition reported between 1998 and 2000. Average tuition was reported at \$9,749 in 2010; \$8,052 in 2008; \$6,976 in 2006; \$5,919 in 2004; \$5,303 in 2002; \$4,705 in 2000; and \$4,480 in 1998.

**Application Fee:** The average nonrefundable application fee is between \$25 and \$50 (38.4%). Schools asking between \$51 and \$100 total 30% of the 203 respondents. Forty-four schools (21.70%) ask \$25 or less to apply for admission to the program.

**Student Insurance:** The number of schools that do not require students to obtain liability insurance is still high at 68.6%. Of the 31.4% of schools that do require students to obtain liability insurance, 53.3% include the cost in tuition.

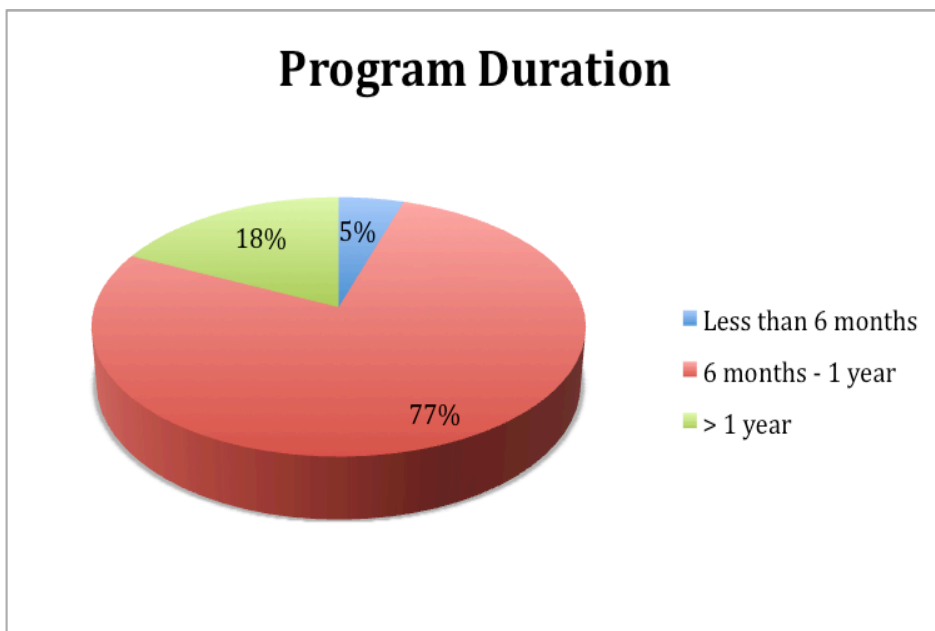
**Transfer Credits:** Of the 206 respondents to this survey question, 163 (79.1%) schools report that they accept transfer credits; however, 77 (48.4%) will only accept transfer credits from an accredited school. Programs at 82 schools (51.6%) will accept transfer credits on approval and 43 schools (20.9%) will not accept transfer credits.

**Second Language:** The majority of schools (201—93.5%) do not teach programs in a second language. Of the 14 schools that do, 11 offer it in Spanish, and 3 offer it in Chinese. Three schools offer additional choices of Thai (2) and Korean (1).

**Financial Aid:** Financial aid is available to students in 150 of the schools surveyed, representing 73.9% of the 203 respondents who answered this query. The percentage of students receiving financial aid varied widely as shown in Table 2. The financial aid entities most commonly used by massage programs are Title IV (83.2%), personal loan (66.4%), and Sallie Mae (48.2%). This contrasts with the 2008 survey results where Sallie Mae was the most used form of financial aid (65.5%), and Title IV (46.8%) and personal loans (3.8%) were second and third. In 2006, Title IV financial aid averaged 40.3% of the aid being used by students. In addition 15 schools (7.4%) offer payment plans for students, while 10 schools rely on state aid (4.9%) and 13 schools (6.4%) offer scholarships, VA funding, and work study programs.

**Table 2: Percentage of Students Receiving Financial Aid**

Description	Percentage	Responses
Less than 20%	17.1%	27
21%–30%	2.5%	4
31%–40%	4.4%	7
41%–50%	5.7%	9
51%–60%	7.6%	12
61%–70%	3.8%	6
71%–80%	16.5%	26
81%–90%	23.4%	37
91%–100%	19.0%	30
Total number of schools responding to this question		158



**Completion Time:** Of the 223 respondents, 11 (4.9%) reported that students complete their programs in less than six months. One hundred and seventy two schools (77.1%) note that programs last from six months to a year, while 40 (17.9%) schools have

programs that last 18 months to two years. When students complete the course, 84% of schools direct graduates to take either the NCETMB or MBLEx to obtain their credentials. Schools report that 81% of their graduates pass one of the two tests and obtain massage credentials.

**Administrative Staff:** The number of paid, full-time equivalent administrative staff is up from 2008 (12.8, median of 3) and 2006 (9.2, median of 3). The typical school has an average of 14.4 full-time administrative staff and a median of 4. At 109 schools (189 responses—57.7%), administrative staff and instructors can take advantage of a formalized benefit plan. Staff compensation is outlined in Table 3.

**Full-Time Instructors:** The average number of full-time instructors at a typical massage school is 2.6 (median 1) down from 2008 and 2006 when schools averaged 6 instructors and 3.4 instructors. Full-time instructors average 27.1 hours (median 30) of classroom instruction each week. Instructor compensation information is provided in Table 3.

**Part-Time Instructors:** The number of part-time instructors is also down from 2008 (8.6) and 2006 (7.4), with schools reporting that they have, on average, 6.9 part-time instructors with a median of 4.5. Part-time instructors average 17.8 (median 20) hours of classroom instruction each week. Instructor compensation information is provided in Table 3.

**Teaching Experience:** Of 193 respondents, 188 (97.4%) reported that they have instructors with 5 or more years of teaching experience. Some schools noted that they have teachers with 2–5 years (104—53.9%) and less than 2 years (68—35.2%).

**Teacher Development:** 86.2% of the schools surveyed provide instructors with formal, written evaluations of performance, while 135 schools (71.8%) offer teacher training. Many schools (79.1%) note that teachers and administrators take part in formal in-service trainings, and 55.4% of schools provide some form of tuition reimbursement for teachers who take continuing education classes. Most schools (86.2%) hold regular faculty meetings.

**Table 3: Staff Compensation Information**

Staff	Pay Range (Per Hour)	Median	Responses	Employee (E) or Independent Contractor (IC)
Administrative Staff	\$15.54–\$24.19	\$15.00–\$20.00	142	E = 122 (85.9%) IC = 22 (15.5%)
Anatomy and Physiology Instructors	\$22.48–\$32.33	\$22.00–\$30.00	158	E = 107 (67.7%) IC = 56 (35.4%)
Massage Therapy Instructors	\$22.82–\$33.29	\$20.00–\$27.00	164	E = 117 (71.3%) IC = 54 (32.9%)
Business Instructors	\$22.21–\$28.26	\$20.00–\$27.00	136	E = 95 (69.9%) IC = 47 (34.6%)

**Curriculum:** Out of 151 responses, 75 (49.7%) schools reported that core skills is the focus of their programs, while 65 (43.0%) schools reported that clinical treatment is the focus of their programs. An additional 18.5% of schools characterized their programs as diverse, integrative, and holistic. 61.5% offer classes in spa services balanced by the same percentage that offer classes in massage conducted in a medical setting. Only 23.8% also offered classes in skin care work. Table 4 outlines the details of schools' programs, while Table 5 shows how schools value specific areas of their program. The breakdown of instructors to students for lab (hands on) and lecture classes is presented in Table 6.

**Table 4: Program Hours and Topic Breakdown**

Topic	Responses	Average Hours	Median Hours
Anatomy and Physiology	151	118.8	113.5
Pathology	145	46.3	40
Kinesiology	138	57.9	50
Business	151	33.1	25.5
Ethics	145	17.3	15
Professionalism	121	21.2	15
Modalities	132	122.6	100
Massage Theory and Practice	148	190.7	180
Student Clinic	141	96.2	90
Internship or Externship	103	34.3	22
First Aid/CPR	122	8.3	8
Formal Written Exam	93	14.3	8
Examination	80	15.2	10
Formalized Final	95	9.1	4
Practical Exam	105	13.4	6

**Table 5: Schools' Value of Broad Topic Areas (1-Very Low, 5-Very High)**

Broad Topic Area	Average Ranking	Responses
Study skills	3.82	169
Skill development	3.91	168
Interpersonal dynamics	4.08	168
Modalities	4.17	169
Kinesiology	4.17	170
Awareness of touch	4.20	169
A&P	4.53	170
Clinical application	4.66	170

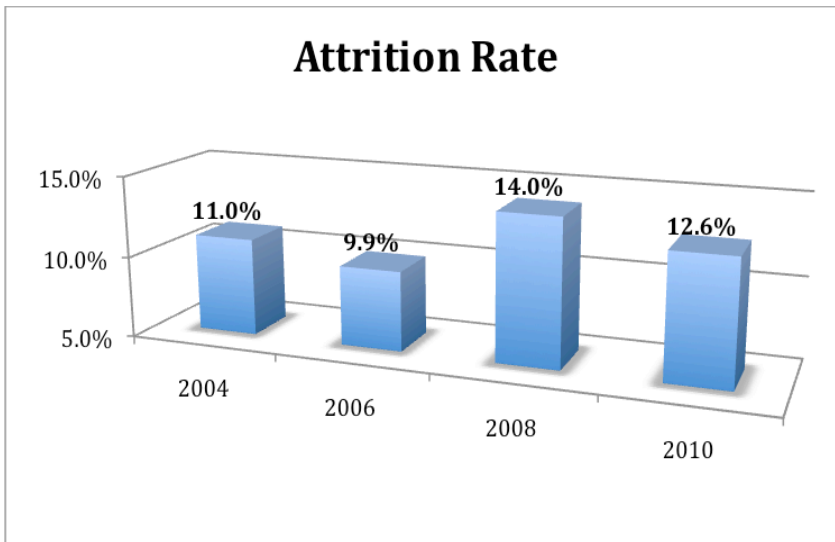
**Table 6: Instructor-to-Student Ratio for Classes (190 Respondents)**

Ratio Description	Lecture		Lab (Hands On)	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
< 10 students to 1 instructor (<10:1)	56	29.5%	93	48.9%
11-15:1	59	31.1%	65	34.2%
16-20:1	46	24.2%	23	12.1%
21-25:1	19	10.0%	6	3.2%
26-30:1	7	3.7%	2	1.1%
>30:1	3	1.6%	1	0.5%

**Student Clinic:** Most schools run a student clinic (183 schools from 206 respondents—88.8%) as part of the massage program curriculum. The breakdown of fees charged at student clinics is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Fees Charged at the Student Clinic (173 Respondents)**

Fee Range	Responses	Percentage
\$10-\$20	33	19.1%
\$21-\$30	89	51.4%
\$31-\$40	45	26.0%
\$41-\$50	4	2.3%
\$51-\$60	2	1.2%



**Attrition:** School attrition rates are dropping slightly, from 14% reported in 2008 to 12.6% reported this year. In 2006, the average attrition rate was 9.9%, and in 2004 it was 11%. This year schools identified their top 10 reasons students do not complete school. Family or personal reasons and financial problems were the most common reasons students gave for leaving school.



**Professional Clinic:** Fewer schools answering the survey in 2010 are offering professional clinics (44.9%) than in the 2008 survey (55.7%). Schools housing professional clinics were on the rise in 2004 (81%) and 2006 (85.7%).

**Continuing Education Programs:** The majority of schools responding to the survey (68.6%) reported that they run continuing education programs.

**Placement Services:** 83.7% of schools offer placement services. This correlates to the number of schools offering placement services in 2006 (83.9), which dropped slightly in 2008 to 80.1%. 72.2% characterize their services as “formal,” or more than just a bulletin board at the school. Placement rates for the 183 respondents are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Placement Rates Within Six Months of Graduation (183 Respondents)**

Placement Range	Responses	Percentage
Below 40%	7	3.8%
40%–50%	9	4.9%
51%–60%	10	5.5%
61%–70%	15	8.2%
71%–80%	42	23.0%
81%–90%	57	31.1%
91%–100%	43	23.5%