Overview

This unit is about exploring the principles and practices of complementary therapies. Learners will develop the knowledge and understanding of the history and influences on the complementary therapy sector and the key aspects of good clinical practice.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, learners will:

LO1 Understand the key historical factors and theoretical background for complementary therapies
LO2 Understand the main influences on working within the complementary therapy industry
LO3 Understand the key aspects of good clinical practice
Assessment requirements

Learners must complete both assessment requirements related to this unit:

1. External examination
2. Graded synoptic assessment

1. External examination

The theory content of LO1, LO2 and LO3 will be tested by an external examination at the end of the period of learning.

External examinations will test knowledge and understanding from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Learners should use the unit content section of this unit to aid revision since exam questions will test the full breadth of this section.

External examinations will be set and marked by VTCT and will contribute to the overall qualification grade.

2. Graded synoptic assessment

In the last term or final third of their qualification learners will be required to undertake a graded synoptic assessment. This will require learners to carry out a range of services from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Assessment coverage will vary year on year, although all services will be covered over time.

VTCT will set a brief for centres which will detail the services to be covered in the graded synoptic assessment. Grading descriptors for the synoptic assessment will also be provided by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will be marked and graded by centre staff and externally quality assured by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will contribute to the overall qualification grade.
Unit content

LO1 Understand the key historical factors and theoretical background for complementary therapies

Learners must know the history and origins of complementary therapies:
The history and origins of
- Body massage – China 3000 BC, Japanese shiatsu, Indian ayurvedic medicine, the Greeks, the Romans, Per Henrik Ling, physiotherapy, ongoing research and developments
- Aromatherapy – the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, China or India, the great plague, herbal and other influences, e.g. Culpeper, Gerard, naturopathy, the influence of allopathic medicine, first world war and Professor Gattefosse, Jean Valnet, Marguerite Maury, ongoing research and developments
- Reflexology – the history and development of reflex zone therapy and reflexology, the Ancients, the Chinese, the American Indians, Sir Henry Head, Sir Charles Sherrington, Dr. William Fitzgerald, Edwin Bowers, Joseph Riley, Joseph Corvo, Eunice Ingham, Dwight Byers, Doreen Bayly, Hanne Marquardt, ongoing research and developments
- The history and development from ancient times to modern day (e.g. ancient Egypt, China, India, Ancient Greece, Rome, Persia, Europe and the Americas)
- The history and development of other therapies (e.g. acupuncture, Alexander technique, aromatherapy, Bach flower, Bowen technique, shiatsu, reiki, remedial massage, kinesiology, herbalism, hypnotherapy)
- The concept of holism and holistic health
- The concept of balance and harmony
- The effects of physical environment on health and wellbeing
- The effects of social, economic and environmental factors on health and wellbeing

Learners must know the commonly available complementary therapies:
- Massage – Swedish massage movements, physical effects and benefits, psychological effects
- Aromatherapy – definition and theories, the uses of essential oils, physical effects and benefits, psychological effects
- Reflexology – definition and theories, reflex points, zones and their relationship to body systems, physical effects and benefits, psychological effects

Learners must evaluate the theory of techniques used in commonly available complementary therapies:
- Critically compare the theory of techniques – body massage, aromatherapy, reflexology, other therapies e.g. acupuncture, Alexander technique, aromatherapy, flower essences, Bowen technique, shiatsu, reiki, remedial massage, kinesiology, herbalism, hypnotherapy, the value of different theories
LO2 Understand the main influences on working within the complementary therapy industry

Learners must know the legal obligations of working with clients and the general public:

• Any other local, national or European legislation as noted in NOS and Core Curriculum
• Legal obligations when working with clients and the general public – duty of care applicable when working as a complementary therapist, disclosure, insurance, confidentiality, importance of meeting legal obligations to client

Learners must know the codes of practice and ethics relating to complementary therapies:

• Definition of codes of practice and ethics
• Importance of codes of practice and ethics
• Codes of practice and ethics developed by the industry and professional associations (e.g. FHT – www.fht.org.uk)

Learners must analyse the roles of professional organisations relating to complementary therapies:

• Professional organisations – for example Federation of Holistic Therapies (FHT), aims, objectives, roles, activities, functions of professional associations

Learners must evaluate the process of registration and regulation of complementary therapies:

• Statutory regulation of the profession, national occupational standards, national qualifications, voluntary regulatory bodies, state register of qualified therapists, CNHC, benchmarks for good practice
LO3 Understand the key aspects of good clinical practice

Learners must know the information required for assessment and treatment planning:
- Name, address, telephone number (day and night), GP details, medical history, client lifestyle, client profile, details of contra-indications and contra-actions, outline of the course of action and treatment methods advised, specific to the therapy, treatment benefits, documentation of treatment media, explanation of how the programme will be evaluated and the review process, agree treatment objectives and recommended treatment plan based upon client’s needs and expectations, consent to the treatment – either client or appointed companion, client’s signature (or that of the appointed companion) and treatment date, homecare advice, product advice, recommendations for further treatments.

Learners must know how to accurately record information, store records and ensure confidentiality:
- Methods of recording and storing information, e.g. in writing, electronically, record and store in line with current legislation and professional codes of conduct, importance of accurate record keeping whilst ensuring confidentiality, disclosure of information to others (e.g. non-disclosure, referral).

Learners must evaluate appropriate referral procedures and protocols to use with a client and others involved in integrated healthcare:
- Only work within the realms of own scope of practice and expertise as a complementary therapist, only recommend treatments which are relevant and appropriate to the client, client suitability, e.g. young, elderly, pregnant, healthy, disabled etc. Conditions for which complementary therapy is appropriate, where complementary therapy may be used with caution or modifications to treatment and techniques, where treatment is contra-indicated, where treatment is inappropriate.
- When a client should be referred to either GP, counsellor, other complementary therapist, member of the social care or nursing team (when working in care) or other voluntary or statutory services, e.g. social services, Citizens Advice Bureau.

Learners must know how to effectively communicate when dealing with a client and colleagues in maintaining good practice:
- Good communication skills – asking open and closed questions where appropriate, listening and hearing, barriers to effective communication, appropriate body language at all times, interpersonal distance, trust, professionalism, confidence and enthusiasm, confidentiality, importance of effective communication and rapport with others (client, working team, other therapists, suppliers).
Delivery guidance

Teachers are encouraged to use innovative, practical and engaging delivery methods to enhance the learning experience. Learners may benefit from:

- Meaningful employer engagement so they relate what is being learned to the real world of work and understand commercial competence and the use of products, tools and equipment, target setting and the importance of meeting targets in the workplace.

Links with other units

This unit is closely linked with the following units:

**UCT1M Business practice for complementary therapies**
This unit is about business practice for complementary therapies. Learners will develop knowledge, understanding and skills in researching, planning, maintaining and marketing a business in the complementary therapies industry.

**UCT3M Knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology for complementary therapies**
Knowledge of the structure and function of the systems of the body, as well the diseases and disorders most significantly underpins the knowledge and practical skills gained in this unit. Other elements of anatomy and physiology are also relevant to this unit in terms of understanding contra-indications to treatment as well as possible contra-actions.

**UCT4M Provide body massage for complementary therapies**
This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills required to prepare for and provide a professional body massage treatment to the client, whilst following salon requirements. Learners will also develop an understanding of classical massage movements, the possible contra-indications to treatment, appropriate aftercare advice and the effects and indications of massage treatments.

**UCT5M Provide aromatherapy for complementary therapies**
This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills required to prepare for and provide a professional aromatherapy massage treatment to the client, whilst following salon requirements. Learners will also develop an understanding of classical aromatherapy massage movements, the possible contra-indications to treatment, appropriate aftercare advice and the effects and indications of aromatherapy massage treatments.

**UCT6M Provide reflexology for complementary therapies**
This unit will enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills required to prepare for and provide a professional reflexology treatment to the client whilst following salon requirements. Learners will also develop an understanding of classical reflexology massage movements, the possible contra-indications to treatment, appropriate aftercare advice and the effects and indications of reflexology treatments.

Graded synoptic assessment

At the end of the qualification of which this unit forms part, there will be a graded synoptic assessment which will assess the learner’s ability to identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from a number of units from within the qualification. It is therefore necessary and important that units are delivered and assessed together and synoptically to prepare learners suitably for their final graded assessment.