

RUHANI COLLEGE

Registered Massage Therapy Diploma Program

COURSE SYLLABUS

RU RMT 20 — Pathological Treatments · Clinical Massage Pathology and Treatment

21 instructional days · 147 contact hours · 23 lectures · v1.0 · Revised- August 2026

Issued to students at the start of the course. This syllabus is the governing statement of what the course covers, how it is delivered and how it is assessed. Where any other course document differs from it, this syllabus governs.

1. Course Description

RU RMT 20 — Pathological Treatments is the clinical synthesis course of the diploma. It is where the anatomy of RU RMT 02–06, the assessment repertoire of RU RMT 08, the technique repertoire of RU RMT 09 and RU RMT 14, and the pathology of RU RMT 10 and RU RMT 15 are brought to bear on twenty-four named musculoskeletal and neuromuscular conditions, and rehearsed to entry-level proficiency before clinical internship.

For each condition you will learn the etiology and pathophysiology, the clinical presentation, the assessment that confirms or excludes it, the indications and contraindications, the treatment protocol and its modifications by stage of healing, and the self-care that carries recovery between appointments. You will practise every protocol at the table under supervision, and you will be examined on your hands three times.

The course also teaches the boundary of the profession. A registered massage therapist forms a clinical impression; a physician makes a diagnosis. Several conditions in this course — acute compartment syndrome, suspected deep vein thrombosis, an undiagnosed disc lesion — are taught principally so that you recognise them and stop. That judgement is assessed as directly as any technique.

2. Delivery

Format. Instructor-led. The didactic component is delivered in person at the Brampton campus and concurrently live online via Zoom; you may attend the theory component either way.

In person only. All supervised hands-on laboratory practice, all three oral practicals and all invigilated written sittings are attended in person and cannot be completed online. This is 103 of the 147 hours.

Zoom conduct. Sessions are not recorded by the College and must not be recorded, photographed, screen-captured or re-transmitted by students. Classmates appear on camera in a professional learning setting and their privacy is protected on the same terms as a client's. Keep your camera on during discussion unless you have made other arrangements with the instructor.

Schedule. 21 days, 7 hours per day, 147 hours in total: 44 hours of didactic theory, 90 hours of supervised hands-on laboratory practice and 13 hours of invigilated assessment. Counting station time at the three oral practicals, 100.5 hours (68.4%) are spent at the table.

Dress and readiness. Laboratory days require clothing that permits access to the region being treated, short clean nails, no rings or wrist jewellery, tied-back hair and no scent. You will be both therapist and client during partner practice.

3. Prerequisites

RU RMT 02–06 (anatomy, physiology, palpation and arthrology); RU RMT 08 (Physical Assessment); RU RMT 09 (Massage Theory and Techniques); RU RMT 10 and RU RMT 15 (Pathology 1 and 2); RU RMT 12 (Health and Safety). RU RMT 20 is in turn a prerequisite for the clinical internship courses RU RMT 13, 18 and 27.

This course assumes you can already palpate the structures named in each protocol, perform the special tests referenced in each assessment section, and execute the techniques named in each treatment plan. It teaches you when and why to use them on a named pathology, not how to perform them for the first time.

4. Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion you will be able to:

- CLO 1** Describe the etiology, pathophysiology, clinical presentation and natural history of the twenty-two musculoskeletal and neuromuscular conditions taught in this course.
- CLO 2** Identify the indications, cautions, local and absolute contraindications and red flags associated with each condition, and determine when treatment must be withheld, modified or referred.
- CLO 3** Determine the stage of tissue healing from history and presentation, and state what each stage permits and prohibits in massage therapy treatment.
- CLO 4** Select, justify and perform soft-tissue techniques indicated for each condition, adapting depth, rate, rhythm and positioning to the client's presentation and response.
- CLO 5** Perform a structured assessment — history, observation, palpation, range of motion, length and strength testing and special tests — and interpret the findings into a clinical impression within the RMT scope of practice.

- CLO 6** Formulate an initial and ongoing treatment plan with prioritised, functional goals, and adapt that plan as the presentation changes across a course of care.
- CLO 7** Communicate the assessment findings and the treatment plan at the level of the listener, obtain and maintain informed consent, and document the encounter accurately in SOAP format.
- CLO 8** Design and teach hydrotherapy, self-care, remedial exercise and prevention education matched to the client's condition, occupation and daily demands.

5. Conditions Taught

One lecture per condition or topic, twenty-three lectures in all.

Lecture 01	Course Introduction & Foundations of Pathology	3.00 h	Day 1
Lecture 02	Whiplash (Cervical Acceleration–Deceleration)	4.00 h	Day 1
Lecture 03	Tension Headache	3.50 h	Day 2
Lecture 04	Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction	3.50 h	Day 2
Lecture 05	Sprains & Strains	3.50 h	Day 3
Lecture 06	Muscle Spasm	3.50 h	Day 3
Lecture 07	Trigger Points	3.50 h	Day 4
Lecture 08	Scar Tissue	3.50 h	Day 4
Lecture 09	Thoracic Outlet Syndrome	6.50 h	Day 5
Lecture 10	Bicipital Tendinosis	3.50 h	Day 6
Lecture 11	Lateral Epicondylitis	3.50 h	Day 6
Lecture 12	Medial Epicondylitis	3.50 h	Day 7
Lecture 13	Pronator Teres Syndrome	3.50 h	Day 7
Lecture 14	Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	7.00 h	Day 8
Lecture 15	Compartment Syndrome	7.00 h	Day 9
Lecture 16	Degenerative Disc Disease	7.00 h	Day 11
Lecture 17	Hyperkyphosis	7.00 h	Day 12
Lecture 18	Hyperlordosis	6.25 h	Day 13
Lecture 19	Piriformis Syndrome	7.00 h	Day 14
Lecture 20	Iliotibial Band Syndrome	7.00 h	Day 15
Lecture 21	Patellofemoral Dysfunction	7.00 h	Day 17
Lecture 22	Plantar Fasciitis	7.00 h	Day 18
Lecture 23	Pes Planus, Pes Cavus & Hallux Valgus	7.00 h	Day 19

Lectures 21, 22 and 23 were previously issued as 21a, 21b and 21c. The current numbering governs; any material still carrying the old numbers refers to the same content

6. Required and Recommended Texts

Required

- R1.** Rattray, F. & Ludwig, L. (2000). Clinical Massage Therapy: Understanding, Assessing and Treating Over 70 Conditions. Toronto: Talus Inc.
Used in: All 23 lectures
- R2.** Werner, R. (2019). A Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology (7th ed.). Books of Discovery.
Used in: L16–L23
- R3.** Magee, D.J. (2014). Orthopedic Physical Assessment (6th ed.). St. Louis: Saunders / Elsevier.
Used in: L16–L23
- R4.** Lowe, W. (2009). Orthopedic Assessment in Massage Therapy. Sisters, OR: Daviau-Scott.
Used in: L16–L23

Recommended

- R5.** Travell, J.G. & Simons, D.G. (1999). Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction: The Trigger Point Manual (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins.
Used in: L07, L09, L19, L20, L22, L23
- R6.** Cyriax, J. Textbook of Orthopaedic Medicine.
Used in: L05, L08, L10, L11, L12
- R7.** Butler, D.S. Mobilisation of the Nervous System / The Sensitive Nervous System.
Used in: L13, L14
- R8.** Page, P., Frank, C.C. & Lardner, R. (2010). Assessment and Treatment of Muscle Imbalance: The Janda Approach. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
Used in: L18

Primary sources cited in individual lectures

- R10.** Spitzer, W.O., Skovron, M.L., Salmi, L.R. et al. (1995). Scientific Monograph of the Quebec Task Force on Whiplash-Associated Disorders. (L02)
- R11.** International Headache Society. Classification of headache disorders. (L03)
- R12.** Pierson, M.J. (2011). Changes in temporomandibular joint dysfunction symptoms following massage therapy: a case report. Int J Ther Massage Bodywork, 4(4). (L04)
- R13.** American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Sprains, strains and other soft-tissue injuries. (L05)
- R14.** Melzack, R. & Wall, P.D. (1965). Pain mechanisms: a new theory. Science, 150(3699), 971–979. (L06)

Carried anatomical reference

- R9.** Tortora, G.J. & Grabowski, S.R. Principles of Anatomy & Physiology (9th ed.). Carried from RU RMT 02–06 and used as the anatomical reference throughout; it is not the text of this course.

Regulatory and accreditation sources

- R15.** FOMTRAC. Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice (September 2016).
- R16.** College of Massage Therapists of Ontario. Standards of Practice; Regulated Health Professions Act 1991; Massage Therapy Act 1991; Health Care Consent Act 1996; PHIPA 2004.
- R17.** CMTCA. Accreditation Standards for Massage Therapy Education Programs in Canada.
Rattray & Ludwig is the framework on which all 23 lectures are built and is the text you should read alongside every lecture. It dates from 2000 and is paired with Werner (2019) and Magee (2014) for currency; where the two differ on a clinical point, the current CMTCA Standards of Practice govern.

Materials issued to you

- A Student Handout for every lecture — 23 in all — carrying that lecture's content in delivery order, its learning outcomes, key takeaways, references, and review questions with answers.
- Six study guides: one for each quiz and one for each oral practical.
- This syllabus, and the marking criteria for every graded component except the three oral practical rubrics, which are examiner-only.

7. Assessment

Eight graded components total 100%.

Component	Weight	Marks	Format	When
Quiz 01	10%	30	30 multiple choice, 30 min	Day 5
Quiz 02	10%	40	40 multiple choice, 40 min	Day 13
Oral Practical 1	12%	12	station, plan and consent	Day 10
Oral Practical 2	16%	18	station, focused treatment	Day 16
Case Study Assignment	5%	100	written case, 8 criteria	Issued Day 5, due Day 19

Final Written Examination	20%	50	50 multiple choice, 75 min	Day 20
Final Oral Practical	22%	18	station, focused treatment	Day 21
Professional Practice	5%	20	5 criteria, 3 checkpoints	Days 7, 14, 21
TOTAL		100%		

The four blocks

Professional practice	5%	observed across all 21 days
Written theory	40%	Quiz 01 10% + Quiz 02 10% + Final Written Examination 20%
Practical examination	50%	OP1 12% + OP2 16% + Final OP 22%
Case study assignment	5%	one integrated multi-pathology written case

Half the grade is earned at the table. That is deliberate and it is proportionate to a course that spends 100.5 of its 147 hours there. If you are strong on paper and weak with your hands, this course will find that out.

What each component asks of you

Quiz 01 — 30 multiple choice, 30 minutes, Day 5. Lectures 01–08: foundations of pathology, whiplash, tension headache, TMJ dysfunction, sprains and strains, muscle spasm, trigger points, scar tissue. One mark per item, no negative marking.

Quiz 02 — 40 multiple choice, 40 minutes, Day 13. Lectures 09–16: thoracic outlet syndrome, bicipital tendinitis, lateral and medial epicondylitis, pronator teres syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome, compartment syndrome, degenerative disc disease. Five items per lecture.

Oral Practical 1 — 12 marks, Day 10. You are given a stem describing a client's history and assessment findings. You explain the initial and ongoing treatment plan to a standardised client and obtain informed consent. Two minutes to read, ten minutes to perform. Marked on communication and therapeutic relationship (4) and on the eight elements of informed consent (8). Stem pool drawn from Lectures 01–08.

Oral Practical 2 — 18 marks, Day 16. You explain and perform a focused treatment on a standardised client. Consent is assumed; oil, lotion and towels are available. Two minutes to read, ten minutes to perform. Marked on communication (4), preparation and draping (3), general principles (3) and specific treatment across two named techniques (8). Stem pool drawn from Lectures 01–14.

Case Study Assignment — 100 marks, issued Day 5, due Day 19. A single client presenting with several concurrent conditions. 1,500–2,500 words, referenced. Eight analytic criteria: pathology analysis 20, clinical reasoning 20, treatment plan 20, safety and contraindications 10, home care 10, referral decisions 5, SOAP documentation 10, professional presentation 5. Late work loses 10% of the earned grade per day to a maximum of five days.

Final Written Examination — 50 multiple choice, 75 minutes, Day 20. The whole course. Twenty-six of the fifty items test Lectures 17–23, which no earlier quiz samples; the remaining twenty-four revisit Lectures 01–16.

Final Oral Practical — 18 marks, Day 21. The same format and rubric as Oral Practical 2, with the stem pool drawn from the whole course — nine lower-limb and spinal conditions plus three carried forward from the upper quadrant.

Professional Practice — 20 marks, continuous. Observed across all 21 days against five criteria: safety, consent and scope; professional conduct, decorum and boundaries; preparation and use of laboratory time; completion of required learning activities; and response to feedback and self-reflection. Recorded at three checkpoints, Days 7, 14 and 21. The Day 21 rating is the grade of record; the first two are formative and you will be told where you stand.

The automatic safety provision

The Case Study Assignment contains a safety-critical finding. A submission that proposes treating it — including one that complies with the client's request to have it treated — or that omits it altogether, fails the assignment regardless of accumulated marks, and the matter is referred to the assessment lead. This provision operates independently of the arithmetic. The same principle applies at every station and in every laboratory: an act that would place a real client at unreasonable risk is not a lost mark, it is a failure to be safe.

8. Passing the Course

Five conditions. All five must be met; meeting four is not a pass.

- 1. Overall grade.** A minimum of 70% across the eight components, computed on the unrounded weighted total.
- 2. Submission.** All eight components attempted and submitted. There is no separate pass mark on the written instruments — you may fail one quiz and still pass the course.
- 3. Practical gate.** A minimum of 70% on each oral practical independently: 9 of 12 at Oral Practical 1, 13 of 18 at Oral Practical 2, 13 of 18 at the Final Oral Practical. Passing two stations does not compensate for failing the third.
- 4. Attendance.** A minimum of 70% of scheduled hours — 102.9 of 147. All in-person laboratory sessions and all three station days must be attended. A missed station day is rescheduled, not waived.
- 5. Safe and professional conduct.** An Unsatisfactory rating on the safety and consent criterion of the professional practice rubric at the Day 21 checkpoint, or a triggered automatic safety failure on the Case Study Assignment, requires a documented remediation plan and a repeat demonstration of safe conduct before any grade is released, whatever the arithmetic shows.

Grading scale

A	90–100%	Pass	Outstanding — comprehensive, accurate, consistently well applied
B	80–89%	Pass	Very good — accurate with minor gaps
C	70–79%	Pass	Satisfactory — meets the minimum program standard
F	below 70%	Fail	Below standard — remediation and reassessment considered

Your percentage is recorded, not only your letter. Three grading scales are currently in circulation across the diploma; the scale above is the one that governs this course and the one printed on your final marking sheet.

Remediation and reassessment

Where a component is failed, the instructor records the failure, the reason and the remediation offered on the final marking sheet. Reassessment, where it is offered, uses a different form of the instrument built from the same blueprint, not the paper you sat. Reassessment is not available for the safety condition: that requires a documented plan and an observed repeat demonstration.

9. Course Schedule

Seven hours per day. Days 10, 16 and 21 are station days: half the day is the examination rotation and half is supervised practice, so no student loses table time to invigilation.

- Day 1.** L01 Course Introduction & Foundations of Pathology; L02 Whiplash
5.0 theory / 2.0 lab
- Day 2.** L03 Tension Headache; L04 TMJ Dysfunction
3.5 theory / 3.5 lab
- Day 3.** L05 Sprains & Strains; L06 Muscle Spasm
3.5 theory / 3.5 lab
- Day 4.** L07 Trigger Points; L08 Scar Tissue
3.5 theory / 3.5 lab
- Day 5.** Quiz 01; L09 Thoracic Outlet Syndrome
2.0 theory / 4.5 lab / 0.5 assessment · Quiz 01 (10%); Case Study Assignment issued
- Day 6.** L10 Bicipital Tendinitis; L11 Lateral Epicondylitis
3.0 theory / 4.0 lab
- Day 7.** L12 Medial Epicondylitis; L13 Pronator Teres Syndrome
3.0 theory / 4.0 lab · Professional Practice checkpoint 1
- Day 8.** L14 Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
2.0 theory / 5.0 lab
- Day 9.** L15 Compartment Syndrome
2.25 theory / 4.75 lab
- Day 10.** Oral Practical 1 — station rotation and supervised practice
3.5 lab / 3.5 assessment · Oral Practical 1 (12%)
- Day 11.** L16 Degenerative Disc Disease
2.0 theory / 5.0 lab
- Day 12.** L17 Hyperkyphosis
2.0 theory / 5.0 lab
- Day 13.** Quiz 02; L18 Hyperlordosis
1.75 theory / 4.5 lab / 0.75 assessment · Quiz 02 (10%)
- Day 14.** L19 Piriformis Syndrome
2.0 theory / 5.0 lab · Professional Practice checkpoint 2
- Day 15.** L20 Iliotibial Band Syndrome
1.75 theory / 5.25 lab

Day 16. Oral Practical 2 — station rotation and supervised practice

3.5 lab / 3.5 assessment · Oral Practical 2 (16%)

Day 17. L21 Patellofemoral Dysfunction

1.75 theory / 5.25 lab

Day 18. L22 Plantar Fasciitis

1.75 theory / 5.25 lab

Day 19. L23 Pes Planus, Pes Cavus & Hallux Valgus

1.75 theory / 5.25 lab · Case Study Assignment due (5%)

Day 20. Integration, whole-course review and the final written sitting

1.5 theory / 4.25 lab / 1.25 assessment · Final Written Examination (20%)

Day 21. Final Oral Practical — station rotation and supervised practice

3.5 lab / 3.5 assessment · Final Oral Practical (22%); Professional Practice checkpoint 3 (5%)

Assessment dates are fixed at the start of the course and do not move. If you cannot sit an assessment on its date, speak to the instructor before the date, not after it.

10. Policies

Attendance. Institutional policy applies. 70% of scheduled hours is the minimum for this course. Attendance is recorded daily. Arriving after the start of a laboratory session may mean you cannot join partner practice safely; the instructor decides.

Academic integrity. The consequence for cheating, plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind is expulsion from the College. On the Case Study Assignment this includes submitting work generated by another person or by an automated tool as your own, and includes reusing your own work from another course without saying so.

Examination security. Station stems are issued one per candidate and are not to be discussed with students who have not yet been examined. Written papers are collected at the end of every sitting.

Accommodation. Approved accommodations are applied without altering what is assessed. Extra time changes the duration, not the number of items. A reader or scribe changes how you respond, not the criteria. No accommodation waives the practical gate or the safety condition; where a station cannot be attempted, it is deferred and rescheduled. Arrange accommodations through student services before the course begins where possible.

Consent and privacy in the laboratory. You will work on classmates. Consent, draping and the right to stop or modify apply between students exactly as they apply to a client. What you observe about a classmate's body or health in a laboratory session is confidential.

Health and safety. Tell the instructor before a laboratory session if there is a reason you should not receive a particular technique. You are never required to receive treatment; you can decline and observe, and this does not affect your professional practice mark.

Appeals. Grade appeals follow institutional policy and are made in writing within the published window. Appeal the mark, not the marker.

11. How to Succeed in This Course

- Read the handout before the lecture and the review questions after it. The handouts carry what is taught, not a summary of it.
- Practise the protocols outside class hours. Fifty per cent of your grade is earned with your hands and ten minutes at a station is not long enough to work something out for the first time.
- Learn the contraindications as carefully as the techniques. Every written instrument tests them and the safety provision does not negotiate.
- Start the assignment when it is issued on Day 5, not in the week it is due. The conditions in the case are taught up to Day 14.
- Rehearse speaking aloud. Both explaining a plan and narrating a technique are marked, and both are harder under observation than they seem in practice.
- Ask about a red flag the moment you are unsure. Recognising the limit of your own competence is an examined competency, not an admission of weakness.

12. Contact and Governing Documents

Questions about content, assessment or accommodation should be raised with the course instructor in class or through the College's official channels. This syllabus is accompanied by the Instructor Guide, the Competency Mapping and Curriculum Alignment document, the Course Blueprint and the Final Marking and Course Completion Sheet, all at v1.0, August 2026. The Course Blueprint is examination-secure and is not issued to students.

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