
Qualification Specification

iCT3D8 - VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic
Massage

603/4097/6

About VTCT Skills

VTCT Skills is a market-leading specialist vocational and technical Awarding Organisation.

We offer a comprehensive range of qualifications, assessments and services in 17 sectors, including Hairdressing, Beauty, Logistics and Early Years. Working closely with employers and training providers, our ranges are backed by industry and trusted around the world.

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Qualification at a glance

Qualification title	VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage
Qualification number	603/4097/6
Product code	iCT3D8
First registration date	01/10/2019
Age range	16-18, 19+
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	410
Guided Learning (GL) hours	250
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: • External practical examination • External theory examination • Portfolio of evidence containing - Case studies
Grading	Pass/Merit/Distinction
Entry requirements	It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that learners have the required knowledge, understanding and skills to enrol and successfully achieve this qualification.

About this qualification

Aims and objectives

The main aim of the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage is to enable learners to gain the necessary practical and theoretical skills in order to provide massage treatments to the general public and to gain employment in the massage industry. This qualification is suitable for learners aged 16 and over and is designed to provide occupational competence at level 3. It also provides a sound platform into further training at level 3 and 4.

Content

This qualification is for learners who want to work within the massage industry. The qualification consists of 3 mandatory units with a total of 250 hours of Guided Learning (GL) to achieve the full qualification.

The main skills the learner will perform are:

- Consultation techniques – to include understanding the needs of clients and when and when not to treat them, contra-indications, referral procedures explaining possible contra-actions and providing aftercare and homecare advice
- Health, safety and hygiene – contextualised to the environment in which the learner is working
- Holistic massage techniques – to include selecting a suitable massage medium for the client's skin type, classical massage movements and adapting the treatment to the client's specific needs

The learner will also develop knowledge about current legislation and working practice requirements and client care and communication which is essential to work and be successful in the industry.

This qualification also provides:

- The related knowledge and understanding required to perform the massage skills listed above effectively, in particular the anatomy and physiology of the body and common diseases and disorders that may affect when a client should or should not receive treatment
- Knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of complementary therapies
- Knowledge and understanding of professional conduct and business awareness in a complementary therapies context
- Opportunities for learners to focus on the development of their wider skills in a massage setting such as communicating with clients, working with others and problem solving
- Opportunities for learners to develop a range of skills, techniques, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in employment as an holistic massage therapist

Opportunities for progression

Once learners have achieved the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage they may progress on to other VTCT Skills or equivalent qualifications at level 3 and 4, for example:

- Level 3 Diploma in Indian Head Massage
- Level 3 Diploma in Complementary Therapies
- Level 3 Diploma in Aromatherapy
- Level 3 Diploma in Reflexology
- Level 3 Diploma in Sports Massage
- Level 4 Diploma in Spa and Salon Management

Opportunities for employment

There are opportunities for holistic massage therapists to find employment in a variety of areas:

- Complementary health clinics
- Primary health trusts
- Beauty salons
- Spa
- Cruise ships
- Hotels or resorts
- Own clinic

Relationship to National Occupational Standards

This qualification has mapped to National Occupational Standards where they exist and has ensured that best practice in the workplace has been reflected in the qualification. This qualification is linked to the relative job roles as well as ensuring that the qualification reflects the required level of knowledge and ability for the holistic massage therapist at level 3.

Qualification structure

To be awarded the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage, learners must achieve all mandatory units.

The minimum GLH required to achieve this qualification is 250

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is 410

Table 1

Unit code	Mandatory units	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Unit reference number	Unit weighting for the overall qualification grade
iUBT432	Holistic massage	100	T/617/7254	50%
iUBT434	Professional conduct and business awareness	50	F/617/7256	20%
iUBT435	Anatomy and physiology	100	J/617/7257	30%

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Guided Learning Hours is 'the activity of a learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training'. This includes 'the activity of being assessed if the assessment takes place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training'.

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required, in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

Assessment

All internal assessments, treatment evidence, case studies and underpinning knowledge must be completed prior to the final practical examination.

The final external practical examination will be carried out by the external examiner at the end of the period of learning. The external examiner will also verify a sample of the internal assessment, treatment evidence and case studies.

Table 2

Unit code	Mandatory units	Assessment	Grading
iUBT432	Holistic massage	Practical examination	Pass 60% - 74% Merit 75% - 89% Distinction 90% - 100%
		Portfolio of evidence - Case studies 5 clients x 4 treatments (20 treatments)	Pass or Refer
		MCQ	Pass 60% - 74% Merit 75% - 89% Distinction 90% - 100%
iUBT434	Professional conduct and business awareness	MCQ	Pass 60% - 74% Merit 75% - 89% Distinction 90% - 100%
iUBT435	Anatomy and physiology	MCQ	Pass 50% - 74% Merit 75% - 89% Distinction 90% - 100%

Unit specifications and additional supporting assessment material for this qualification can be found on the VTCT Skills website.

Grading of the qualification

Learners must achieve a Pass grade or higher in the requisite number of units as specified in the rules of combination, see Table 1 above. Only mandatory units which are graded Pass/Merit/Distinction will contribute to the overall grade.

Practical examinations and theory examinations will be graded Pass/Merit/Distinction.

Portfolio of evidence containing the following will be graded Pass/Fail:

- Case studies

The overall qualification is graded Pass/Merit/Distinction.

Grade boundaries for units and the overall calculation for the qualification grade are open to annual review. Following this review, these boundaries and overall calculations can be adjusted by VTCT Skills. This review and possible change within a qualification are to ensure the standard of the qualification grade is upheld throughout the qualification's lifecycle.

Theory examination

All theory tests must be conducted in a controlled environment and follow the procedures defined by VTCT Skills. The theory tests will be set and marked by VTCT Skills. The centre is responsible for ensuring the examination can operate seamlessly by organising the process as defined in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' which can be found on the VTCT Skills website.

Practical examination

Once all aspects of the mandatory units have been completed, learners will be expected to complete an internal mock practical assessment. This will be undertaken by the internal assessor/lecturer using the internal assessment forms. These must be handed to the external examiner on the day of the final external practical examination.

All practical assessments must be conducted in a controlled environment defined by VTCT Skills. The practical examination will be conducted by an external examiner; however, the centre is responsible for ensuring the examination can operate seamlessly by organising the process as defined in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' which can be found on the VTCT Skills website. The marking criteria and marking scheme can be found under the documents tab within the qualification.

Portfolio of evidence

Learners are required to provide a portfolio of evidence containing treatments and/or case studies that they have performed on clients during their training under the supervision of the lecturer who will monitor the quality of the treatments in order to ensure that they meet the criteria.

- The criteria are detailed on the treatment evidence guidance forms
- The learner will need to complete a client consultation form as evidence that they performed the required number of treatments during their training (see Table 2) as they form part of the internal assessment for the qualification. They can be stored in the learner's portfolio

Quality assurance

Delivery of the qualification

A scheme of work must be approved by VTCT Skills for all units prior to the commencement of the course.

Lecturers should aim to deliver the theory and practical of each unit simultaneously, i.e., both theory and practical of each unit should be taught together to ensure the underpinning knowledge is being delivered at the same time as the practical skills. This will help to ensure that learners understand the structures they are working on as a result of combining delivery with the practical application of treatments.

Centre resources

The organisation delivering the qualification must provide a suitable environment for teaching the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage as well as all equipment both fixed and free standing to complete all aspects of the qualification. Learners need to be made aware of the amount of consumables/towels they will be required to provide.

Achievement record

All units will require an Achievement Record to be completed by the lecturer for each learner. This achievement record will need to be kept by the centre and may be sampled by the external examiner or external quality assurer on their visit.

An Achievement Record for each unit can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website.

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v0.3	14/05/2019	Draft version published to inform centres prior to September launch.	Systems Integration Team
v1.0	13/09/2019	First published	Head of Qualifications and Processing
v2.0	31/10/2019	Removed 'Level 4 Sports Massage' from page 5	Qualifications and Regulation Co-ordinator
v3.0	03/12/2019	Added grade boundary review	Qualifications Administrator
v4.0	01/09/2020	Added COVID-19 Infection Prevention pre-requisite	Product and Regulation Manager
v5.0	01/08/2022	Removed COVID-19 Infection Prevention pre-requisite	Product and Regulation Coordinator
v6.0	01/01/2025	New Branding	Development administrator
v7.0	26/06/2026	Rebranding	Development Administrator