Online Learning Guidelines for ISMETA-Approved Training Programs

July 2025

Background

At the beginning of 2024, the ISMETA Professional Standards Committee received the first application for a totally online, asynchronous training program. When the committee declined the application, the applicant asked what guidelines ISMETA had to offer so that they could restructure their training to meet ISMETA's standards. The committee realized that ISMETA needed to engage the Leadership Council and the membership in this question:

> What guidelines will ISMETA offer about online learning in our Approved Training Programs (ATPs) now that the COVID19 pandemic has ended?

Over a period of 13 months, ISMETA collected input from Leadership Council members and professional members about this important topic. Three surveys, three focus groups, and five conversations were held during Leadership Council meetings. Three surveys and two focus groups were held for professional ISMETA members. These rounds of feedback were integrated into each subsequent version of the proposed guidelines.

The ISMETA Professional Standards Committee held certain primary considerations in mind throughout this process: How can Somatic Movement training programs serve their communities, and our profession, best regarding these elements?

- Value of in-person studio time together, especially for training in hands-on work
- Benefits of live, interactive online learning
- Value of pre-recorded material that is viewed asynchronously
- Importance of increased accessibility (geographical location and cost)

FINAL GUIDELINES

The final guidelines we created with extensive input from our members and Leadership Council describe three categories of ISMETA-Approved Training Programs:

- In-person Training
- Mixed Format Training
- Online Training (for 250-hour programs only)

For each training category, ISMETA recommends these specific percentages for in-person and online training hours.

For 250-hour and 500-hour programs

- **In-person Training**: 81% - 100% of the training hours live, "in-person" – that is, in the same physical location – with 0% - 19% of the training hours online

- **Mixed Format Training**: 20% - 80% of the training hours live, "in-person" – that is, in the same physical location – with 20% - 80% of the training hours online

For 250-hour programs only

- **Online Training**: 0% - 19% of the training hours live, "in-person" – that is, in the same physical location – with 81-100% of training hours online

Online learning – synchronous and asynchronous formats

Any asynchronous online learning (through pre-recorded videos) in any training program category is expected to have a clear structure for supporting and assessing student learning.

For example, in "flipped classrooms", the viewing of pre-recorded materials is followed by reflective writing and/or "quizzes" to assess student learning.

Live interactive follow-up can take the form of peer discussions, group mentoring, or individual mentoring.

ISMETA recommends that In-person and Mixed Format Trainings have a maximum of 30% of their curricula in asynchronous, pre-recorded formats. ISMETA recommends that Online Trainings have a maximum of 80% of their curricula in asynchronous, pre-recorded formats.

Important Elements

ISMETA will not determine which category applies to each program.

Instead, each training program will identify the category with which they want to identify and align their curriculum accordingly.

ISMETA trusts the expertise of the Approved Training Program Directors, and trusts that they know the best way to share their high-quality curricula with their specific students.

Accordingly, ISMETA does not assign different values to the different training formats. *We will only ask that programs clearly state on their websites the percentage of online and in-person learning in their curricula*.

Next Steps

ISMETA will follow up with training programs within 18 months to hear how online learning is going for their teachers and students. Also, we will continue to collect Leadership Council input about how to support high-quality online teaching and learning. Their comments will be synthesized into a resource document for all current and incoming Approved Training Programs to use.