

STUDENT STUDY GUIDE

AUSTRALIAN SHIATSU COLLEGE



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Australian Shiatsu College (ASC), where your transformative journey toward becoming a professional Shiatsu practitioner begins. For nearly 40 years, ASC has led holistic education, combining Japan's ancient healing practices with the profound frameworks of Oriental medicine.

ABOUT THE DIPLOMA

The **Diploma of Shiatsu & Oriental Therapies [HLT52215]** is designed to develop both your technical skills and personal insights as a holistic practitioner. This nationally accredited course combines theoretical learning, hands-on clinical practice, and opportunities for deep personal growth.

STUDY OPTIONS

- **Melbourne-Based:** Weekly in-person sessions at CERES Learning Centre.
- **Remote Learning:** Four week-long intensive practical workshops combined with self-paced online learning.

DURATION

- Full-Time Study: 2 years

- Part-Time Study: 4 years

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At ASC, we believe in:

- **Holistic Growth:** Cultivating therapeutic skills alongside personal wellbeing and energy awareness.
- **Community Spirit:** Building an open, supportive, and respectful learning environment.
- **Professional Excellence:** Supporting students to meet rigorous professional standards as reflective, capable practitioners.

WHY CHOOSE ASC?

Since 1985, ASC has offered innovative, student-focused education as Australia's first registered provider of a Shiatsu qualification. With a flexible **blended delivery model**, we integrate theoretical knowledge, practical application, and community learning.

LEARNING MODALITIES

Our **blended delivery model** ensures that students can balance in-person practical learning with the convenience of online study.

CORE COMPONENTS

1. **Hands-On Practice**

Enjoy structured *in-person classes* at CERES (for local students) or intensive practical workshops (for remote students). Supervised student clinics provide real-world experience treating clients.

2. **Self-Paced Digital Learning**

Access comprehensive videos, downloadable handouts, and quizzes that allow for flexible study. Weekly guided emails structure your learning journey, ensuring you stay on track.

3. **Live Zoom Tutorials**

Weekly 2-hour online sessions facilitate real-time engagement with trainers and peers through discussions, activities, and practical demonstrations.

4. **LMS Discussion Forum**

Engage in reflective conversations, discuss weekly prompts, and connect with trainers and peers in ASC's Learning Management System.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Ensure a seamless experience:

- Quality laptop/computer with a webcam and microphone.
- Stable internet connection (minimum 10 Mbps).
- A quiet, well-lit workspace for online sessions.



SKILL PROGRESSION PATHWAY

LEVEL ONE (FOUNDATIONS)

Students develop core competencies to:

1. Deliver a full-body Shiatsu treatment.
2. Build diagnostic skills and understand meridian theory.
3. Expand practices using classic modalities such as Classical and Barefoot Shiatsu.
4. Integrate foundational skills and knowledge into clinical practice

LEVEL TWO (ADVANCED PRACTICE)

Students refine skills to:

1. Integrate advanced diagnostic tools, like hara assessment.
2. Expand skill set using supportive modalities such as Sotai, cupping and moxibustion.
3. Apply advanced knowledge and analysis to client case studies
4. Create tailored, client-centred treatment plans.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Graduates often build independent practices or collaborate in wellness clinics. Further opportunities include:

- Corporate wellness programmes.
- Community-based initiatives.
- Advanced professional development in complementary areas.

Join professional bodies such as the **Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia (STAA)** to access insurance, networking, and education resources. You can access student membership to get to know their resources.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEARNING PREFERENCES

Returning to study after some time away can feel both exciting and challenging. As a mature-age or adult learner, your approach to learning may differ from your school days, and some study skills may need refreshing. This is perfectly normal, so give yourself the freedom to adjust to a new rhythm of learning.

At its core, the brain's learning processes remain the same for everyone, but the way *you* take in and process information might differ from others. Recognising your learning preferences—noticing how you absorb, retain, and apply knowledge most effectively—can make your studies more fulfilling and successful.

UNDERSTANDING VARK: YOUR LEARNING STYLE

One proven framework for identifying learning preferences is **VARK**. This model focuses on four different learning styles:

- **Visual:** Learning through images, videos, charts, and diagrams.

- **Auditory:** Learning by listening to explanations, discussions, and conversations.
- **Read/Write:** Learning through text, reading, and note-taking.
- **Kinaesthetic:** Learning through movement, hands-on activities, and practical experience.

WHY IT MATTERS

While it's unrealistic to expect every lesson to suit your exact learning style, understanding how you learn best allows you to tailor your own study methods. Even if some elements of the program feel less intuitive, you can build techniques to work around those challenges by leveraging your strengths.

To identify your learning preferences, consider taking the free **VARK Learning Styles Questionnaire** at varkn.com. Once you've recognised your learning style, you can consciously structure your study time and routines in ways that maximise those strengths.

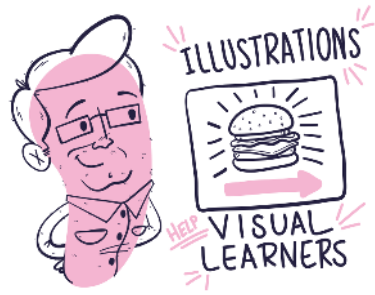
STRATEGIES FOR EACH LEARNING STYLE

Here are some tips that align with the various learning preferences:

1. VISUAL LEARNERS

- Characteristics:

- Prefer pictures, graphs, charts, and diagrams.
- Absorb information better when it's presented visually.
- May not find purely verbal instructions memorable.
- Tend to say, "When I see it, I understand."
- Study Tips for Visual Learners:
 - Highlight key points in handouts with coloured pens or underlining.
 - Create visual aids like flashcards or mind maps to summarise information.
 - Watch videos or revisit lecture diagrams to consolidate understanding.
 - Use visual metaphors or symbols to represent concepts.



2. AUDITORY LEARNERS

- Characteristics:
 - Thrive in group discussions, debates, and conversations.
 - Prefer listening to instructions or explanations over reading them.

- May recall details from tutorials or verbal feedback more easily than notes.

- Study Tips for Auditory Learners:

- Re-listen to video lectures while you complete other activities to consolidate learning.
- Participate actively in discussions during tutorials or forums.
- Explain concepts aloud when revising, or study with a partner.
- Use verbal brainstorming to articulate treatments or technical



concepts.

3. READ/WRITE LEARNERS

- Characteristics:
 - Prefer absorbing information through reading and writing text.
 - Tend to take detailed notes during tutorials or personal study.
 - Thrive in quiet environments and learn best through written explanations.
- Study Tips for Read/Write Learners:



- Take detailed notes during practical sessions and rephrase them in your own words after.
- Summarise theory by writing short paragraphs explaining key concepts.
- Transform video or tutorial content into written outlines and lists.
- Engage actively with handouts and assigned reading materials.

4. KINAESTHETIC LEARNERS

- Characteristics:
 - Learn best through physical activity, movement, or hands-on work.
 - Tend to feel restless without regular breaks or active involvement.
 - Prefer trial-and-error, interactive learning techniques, and real-world problem solving.



- Study Tips for Kinaesthetic Learners:
 - Practise Shiatsu techniques on a partner to convert classroom instruction into tactile learning.
 - Use objects (futons, stress balls) as focal points for tactile engagement while visualising concepts.
 - Create frequent breaks during study—short sessions interspersed with movement often work best.
 - Stay present during treatments by connecting your breath and body mechanics to the work.

FLEXIBILITY ACROSS LEARNING STYLES

While it's tempting to focus only on your preferred style, successful learners develop flexibility to engage with less familiar methods. For example:

- A **kinaesthetic learner** might supplement hands-on practice with reflective journaling, bridging sessions with written explanations of techniques.
- A **visual learner** might enhance their diagram or chart work with auditory learning through live forum discussions.

Once you're familiar with your preferences, you can shape a study routine to fit your strengths:

- **Incorporate Your Style:** Spend more time on activities that align well with your preferences, like making flashcards (visual) or practising with peers (kinaesthetic).
- **Balance Out Challenges:** Pair difficult tasks with supportive techniques (e.g., discussing assignments aloud with an auditory learner).
- **Experiment and Adjust:** Learning styles are not rigid boxes—experiment to find new ways to refine your approach!

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SHIATSU

As a Shiatsu practitioner, blending knowledge with intuition will require drawing from all learning styles: studying visual diagrams of meridians, discussing case studies in tutorials, processing written reflections, and applying techniques hands-on. Becoming adaptable in how you learn prepares you for the nuanced, dynamic nature of treating clients.

Tip: Use your preferred learning methods to practise the aspects of Shiatsu that feel less familiar. This not only strengthens weaker areas but also leads to a more balanced and holistic learning experience overall.

By recognising and working with your learning style, you'll approach the Diploma of Shiatsu & Oriental Therapies with greater confidence, focus, and enjoyment.

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

A WORD ON COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

The Diploma of Shiatsu & Oriental Therapies at the Australian Shiatsu College is rooted in **Competency-Based Training and Assessment**, a system designed to ensure students achieve a standard of skill and knowledge required for professional practice. This approach is distinct from traditional schooling, where student performance is graded on a scale. Instead, competency-based assessment focuses on whether you can demonstrate practical and theoretical skills to the required standard.

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING?

Competency-Based Training (CBT) revolves around assessing your ability to perform specific tasks and demonstrate your knowledge in real-world or simulated scenarios. Your assessor will evaluate your competency based on a variety of



evidence, including:

- **Practical Observation:** Demonstrations of your Shiatsu skills during clinic sessions or practical intensives.
- **Third-Party Feedback:** Input from supervisors, practice partners, or others familiar with your performance.
- **Written Work:** Your responses to case studies, reflective exercises, or theoretical assessments.
- **Produced Evidence:** Examples of work you've created during the program, such as treatment logs or reflective journals.

Competency is all about demonstrating that you can perform these tasks proficiently, safely, and consistently.

PROVIDING EVIDENCE

You will be asked to provide evidence that supports your claim to competency throughout the course. This could include:

- Logging and reflecting on clinic, home practice, and self-treatment sessions.
- Demonstrating techniques like a full-body Zen Shiatsu treatment or hara diagnosis during supervised practice.
- Responding clearly and fully to assessment questions in your own words.

Always aim to:

1. **Be Clear:** Write and speak in a way that is easy to understand.
2. **Be Comprehensive:** Provide complete and thorough responses or demonstrations.
3. **Be Timely:** If you're unsure about a requirement, don't hesitate to seek guidance early—this gives you more time to refine your work.

HOW YOU'LL BE ASSESSED

Assessments are designed to measure your ability to complete tasks that align with professional standards. This includes:

- Simulated environments (e.g., classroom role-play or student clinics).
- Real-life scenarios during practical intensives or your personal practice.

Your assessor may observe your performance directly or rely on third-party reports, such as a practice partner's feedback or client outcome reflections from your treatment log. In all cases, the goal is to determine whether you've mastered the essential techniques, knowledge, and professional attitudes required to practice Shiatsu.

NO SUCH THING AS 'FAILING'

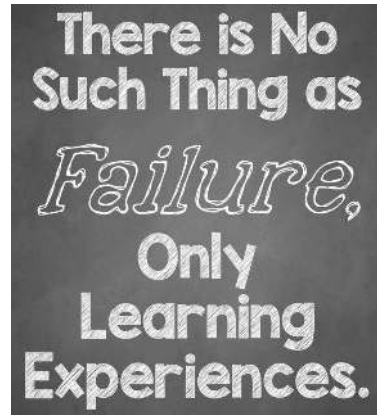
Competency-Based Training takes a constructive approach to learning and assessment. Instead of receiving

a 'fail' if you don't meet requirements, you will be advised on what additional evidence or refinement is needed.

For example:

- If a particular technique is not demonstrated to the required standard during an assessment, you'll receive constructive feedback and guidance on how to improve.
- If written responses are too brief or incomplete, you can revise and resubmit your work to address gaps.

The process is designed to help you grow and succeed by giving you time and support to meet the required standards.



WORKING TOWARD COMPETENCY

Achieving competency is about steady progress, reflection, and practice. Your instructor will provide:

- Clear, actionable feedback on your work and performance.
- Guidance on what additional evidence may be needed.
- A supportive environment to refine your skills.

If you feel unclear about what is being asked during an assessment or task, reach out to your trainer or assessor for clarification—they're there to help!

HOW TO APPROACH ASSESSMENTS CONFIDENTLY

- **Prepare Thoroughly:** Review course materials, practice techniques, and seek feedback wherever possible.
- **Ask Questions:** If you're unsure about an assessment or task, clarify expectations early and often.
- **Embrace Feedback:** Constructive criticism helps you grow and achieve your desired outcomes.
- **Reflect on Your Progress:** Use logs and journals to track areas you've mastered and those still in development.

Competency-Based Training is designed to ensure that, by the time you graduate, you are fully prepared—both technically and theoretically—to deliver high-quality Shiatsu treatments with confidence and professionalism. Trust the process, engage fully with feedback, and remember that your qualifications represent genuine mastery of your craft.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING STRATEGIES

Self-discipline and independent learning habits are vital for success in the Diploma of Shiatsu & Oriental Therapies.

CREATE AN EFFECTIVE AND INSPIRATIONAL STUDY SPACE:

- 1. Dedicated Zone:** Set up a comfortable, distraction-free area. Use ergonomic chairs or cushions to support good posture.
- 2. Organise Materials:** Keep notebooks, props, and digital devices ready for focused study.



OPTIMISE FOR ONLINE LEARNING

- **Audio and Video Readiness:** Use a headset with a microphone for clear communication during tutorials.

- **Prepare in Advance:** Complete pre-session readings or videos to maximise engagement during live learning.

MAINTAINING COMFORT AND MOTIVATION

- Decorate with affirmations or images that inspire you.
- Include plants or position your setup near natural light.
- Develop study rituals, like lighting incense before starting.

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR SUCCESS

- Plan consistent study blocks (10-15 hours per week for beginners).
- Schedule regular times each week for self directed learning and review.
- Break learning into smaller, focused sessions.
- Alternate between theory review and hands-on practice.
- Let your friends and family know about your studies and ask for their support. This might mean avoiding distractions while you're studying or



holding off on mid-week social plans. By staying focused, you can complete your tasks, feel accomplished, and enjoy celebrating on the weekend!

CALENDAR USE

Track tutorials, assessments, and clinic sessions while including time for rest and self-care.

DIGITAL TOOLS

Use apps like Google Calendar or Trello for structured reminders and goal tracking.

ENGAGE WITH RESOURCES

- Actively take notes when watching videos or reading materials.
- Complete quizzes and reflective activities to consolidate your knowledge.
- Share observations on forums to deepen understanding.

WEEKLY HANDS-ON PRACTICE

- Dedicate at least one practice session per week with a partner or peer.
- Reflect on self-treatment exercises to explore your personal connection to techniques.

PRACTICAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Learning Shiatsu requires focused practice supported by an environment conducive to growth:

WEEKLY PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Partner Practice:** Spend 45–60 minutes weekly refining techniques.
- **Self-Treatment:** Apply techniques to yourself to develop empathy and awareness as a practitioner.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Ask practice partners for observations on pressure, transitions, and flow. Seek regular feedback from tutors to refine your approach.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Address time constraints by dividing sessions into shorter blocks.
- Use partner feedback and clinic sessions to identify areas for growth.

THEORETICAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

Connect theory to practice as you develop diagnostic skills and build confidence in treatments:

STUDY WITH INTENTION

Understand the purpose of new techniques by:

1. Tracing meridian pathways or practising diagnostic tools on partners.
2. Journaling about how techniques align with theoretical principles like Yin-Yang and five-element theory.

TUTORIAL PREPARATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Review videos and learning content before tutorials.
- Ask actionable questions such as: "What theory supports the use of a specific technique in this scenario?"
- Actively participate in discussions and activities

PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM

Recording and reflecting on your practice sessions ensures growth and professionalism:

TREATMENT LOG COMPONENTS

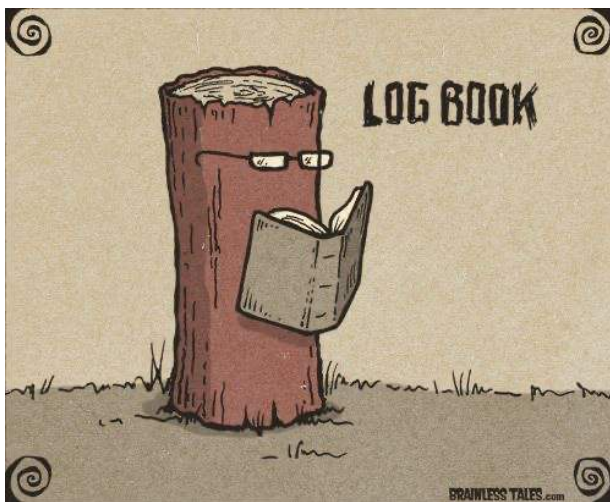
Document sessions in:

1. **Student Clinics:** Record client needs, techniques used, outcomes, and reflections.
2. **Home Practice:** Note techniques, partner feedback, and areas to refine.

- 3. Self-Treatment:** Reflect on what sensations or energy shifts you observed.

USING TEMPLATES

ASC provides a structured log book for clinics, home practice, and self-treatments to guide consistent logging.



STAYING MOTIVATED AND FOCUSED

Embarking on your studies can bring a mix of excitement and challenges. Stress, procrastination, and distractions can arise, but by developing strategies and building a sense of connection with your peers, you can overcome these obstacles. This section provides practical tools to help you manage stress, focus on your goals, and stay connected to the ASC learning community.

UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND HOW TO MANAGE IT

Stress is a natural part of taking on new challenges, and a small amount can even help you perform at your best. However, too much stress can interfere with learning and reduce your overall wellbeing.

SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Feeling overwhelmed, irritated, or restless.
- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping.
- Physical symptoms like headaches, a racing heart, or fatigue.

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS:



1. Connect with Others: Sharing your experiences with fellow students—whether for practice, study, or social relaxation—can lighten the emotional load and provide perspective.

2. Take Breaks: Give yourself scheduled pauses to recharge, even during busy weeks. Use this time to step outside or practise self-treatment techniques.

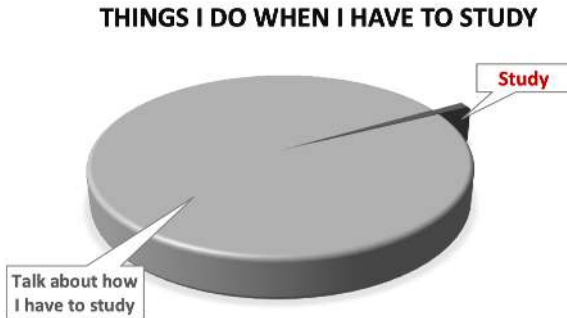
3. Prioritise Your Wellbeing: Make time for light exercise, nourishing meals, and regular sleep. A healthy body supports a healthy mind.

4. Refocus and Plan: When stress builds, pause and write down what needs to be done. Focus on what is truly important and take it step by step.

5. Foster Positivity: Listen to uplifting music or spend time doing something that refreshes your mind, like journaling or connecting with peers.

Stress doesn't need to derail your journey. Reach out, breathe deeply, and focus on small, achievable steps.

OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION



Procrastination often arises from feeling overwhelmed or unsure about how to start. Recognising this and taking simple actions can help you overcome it.

WHY WE PROCRASTINATE:

- Uncertainty about tackling difficult tasks.
- Fear of making mistakes.
- Distracting environments or competing priorities.

HOW TO BEAT PROCRASTINATION:

- 1. Start with Connection:** Pair up with another student to hold each other accountable. Meet up regularly—virtually or in person—whether to practise Shiatsu techniques or discuss study progress.
- 2. Take the First Step:** Commit to working on a task for just 10 minutes. Once you've started, momentum often follows.

3. Break It Into Chunks: Divide big tasks into smaller actions. For example:

- Outline one paragraph of an assignment.
- Practise one meridian pathway.
- Watch one instructional video.

4. Create Accountability: Share your progress or goals in the LMS forum. Knowing others are working alongside you can inspire action.

5. Reward Yourself: Treat yourself for completing small tasks, like enjoying your favourite tea or relaxing with friends.

Procrastination loses its power when you take proactive and achievable steps forward.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

One of the most effective paths to overcoming challenges is connecting with a community of like-minded learners who can provide encouragement, motivation, and insight.

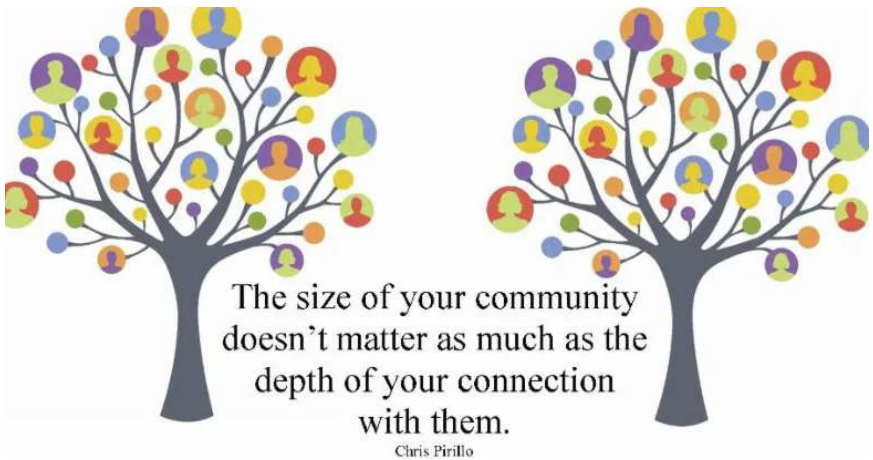
WAYS TO BUILD A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK:

1. Online Meetups for Practice: Partner with fellow students online to practise techniques, share feedback, or explore new ideas together. Remote learners can use video calls for this.

2. Social Relaxation: Host virtual “study breaks” where you and other students can talk, check in on progress, and relax together.

3. Join Peer-to-Peer Practice Groups: Organise informal meetups or online sessions to troubleshoot challenges or practise hands-on skills.

4. Share Your Wins: Use the LMS discussion forum to post about study milestones or challenges you’ve overcome—this can inspire and strengthen



connections.

By fostering these peer connections, you create a sense of community, reduce isolation (especially in remote learning), and build a circle of mutual support.

STAYING MOTIVATED AND FOCUSED

Maintaining motivation is key to long-term success. Here are intentional steps you can take to stay energised and level-headed:



1. Reconnect with Your Goals:
 - Reflect on why you began this journey. How does this diploma support your aspirations personally and professionally?
 - Keep visual reminders of your goals near your study area to re-inspire you during challenging times.
2. Celebrate Milestones with Others:

- Whether you've completed your first Zen Shiatsu treatment or submitted a complex assessment, celebrate—even small wins matter!
 - Share these moments in the forum or during tutorials to inspire your peers and maintain your own excitement.
3. Establish a Routine Around Focus:
- Follow a regular study schedule combined with short breaks to avoid burnout.
 - Remove distractions like social media during focused study sessions.
 - Take intervals to re-centre your attention through mindful breathing or a stretch.

PRACTICAL SELF-CARE FOR LONG-TERM RESILIENCE

Maintaining balance in your routine helps you manage both the physical and mental demands of study:

1. Prioritise Nutrition and Sleep:
 - Nourish your brain with healthy foods like nuts, avocados, and dark leafy greens. Stay hydrated and limit excessive caffeine for sustained energy.
 - Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep, allowing your brain to consolidate learning effectively.
2. Engage in Self-Treatment:

- Practise Shiatsu techniques on yourself to improve focus, relieve tension, and connect personally with your learning.
- 3. Stay Active:
 - Incorporate light exercise into your week to refresh your mind-body connection and increase focus. Walks, yoga, or stretching are excellent options.
- 4. Ask for Help If You Need It:
 - Trainers, peers, and the ASC community are all here to support you—don't hesitate to reach out if challenges feel overwhelming.

COMBINING STRENGTH AND CONNECTION

No journey is meant to be taken alone. By managing stress and procrastination while leaning on your peers for practice and connection, you create a powerful foundation for learning and personal growth. Each challenge overcome is a step closer to becoming a confident, holistic Shiatsu practitioner. Remember, building resilience is an ongoing practice, one best shared with a supportive community.

STUDENT REFLECTION AND PROGRESS TRACKING

ONGOING REFLECTION

Use journals and logbooks to track client treatments, self-treatments, and areas of skill improvement.

Write reflections on each treatment you give focusing on:

- Successes you had (eg remembering a whole routine)
- Insights your gained
- Areas for growth



MONTHLY CHECK-INS

Reflect on:

1. Which techniques have improved?
2. What feedback have I acted on?
3. What goals remain for the next month?

STUDENT REVIEWS

You will engage in need of semester student reviews to touch base on progression. You can also schedule shorter touch base calls during semester if needed.

FIX THE SMALL
PROBLEMS BEFORE
THEY BECOME

BIG !
PROBLEMS !



FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Remember that the journey to becoming a Shiatsu practitioner is as much about personal growth as technical mastery. Embrace challenges as opportunities, celebrate your milestones, and connect deeply with the community of like-minded practitioners at ASC.

The Australian Shiatsu College team supports you every step of the way, and we look forward to seeing you grow into a confident, skilled Shiatsu practitioner. Your journey begins now—let's work together to create balance and healing in the world.