



Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Candidate Handbook

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

fsmtb.org • Effective July 2025



Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Candidate Handbook | Effective July 2025

© 2014-2025 by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards. All rights reserved.

This Candidate Handbook is for individual use only. The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) strictly prohibits the reproduction or redistribution of this publication, in whole or in part, by any means or mechanism for commercial or for-profit use without express written permission. To request permission, please contact FSMTB in writing at: The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, 7300 College Blvd., Suite 650, Overland Park, KS 66210, or via email at info@fsmtb.org.

The FSMTB does not discriminate against any individual based on race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, disability, marital or familial status, ancestry, national origin, or any other category protected by federal or applicable laws and regulations.

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

7300 College Boulevard, Suite 650, Overland Park, Kansas 66210

MBLEX Service Support Center: 913.681.0380 | mblex@fsmtb.org

FSMTB Executive Office: 913.681.0380 | info@fsmtb.org

fsmtb.org

Contents

Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards . 2

Introduction

About this Handbook	5
About the MBLEx	5
Contacting You	5
Privacy & Confidentiality	6
The MBLEx Process	6

Application Process

Regulation of Massage Therapy in the United States	9
MBLEx Eligibility	9
Fees	9
Massage Education Policy	10
Education Verification	10
Apprenticeship	11
International Education	11
Exam Language	11
Testing Accommodations	12
How to Apply for the MBLEx	13
Signature and Acknowledgement	13
FSMTB Online Services	14

Application Review

Application Approval	15
Insufficient Documentation Notification	15
Authenticity & Adequacy of Documentation	15

Approved Applications

Authorization to Test (ATT)	16
ATT Expiration	16

Scheduling

Scheduling Your Exam Appointment	17
Before You Schedule	17
How to Schedule	17
Appointment Confirmation Notice	17
Changing Your Exam Appointment	18

Examination Content Outline 20

Prepare for the MBLEx

FSMTB Study Resources

Take the MBLEx

What to Expect at the Test Center	22
Test Center Staff	22
Report Time and Check-In	22
Lateness on the Day of the Exam	22
Absences on the Day of the Exam	23
Inclement Weather	23
Required Identification	24
Lockers	25
Prohibited Items	25
Test Length and Time Allowed	26
Pre-Exam Modules	26
Examination Breaks	26
Exam Administration Conditions	26

Examination Results

Examination Results Reported as PASS/FAIL	28
Passing MBLEx Results	28
Failing MBLEx Results	28
Result Transfers	28

Retaking the MBLEx

Reapplying for the Exam	29
How Many Times Can I Take the MBLEx?	29
Candidate Care	29

Get Licensed

Reporting MBLEx Results to State Licensing Boards	31
---	----

Notice to MBLEx Applicants

Regarding Exam Irregularities, Misconduct, and Fraud

Fraudulent Documents	33
MBLEx Result Invalidations	33
Exam Irregularities and Cheating	34

Examination Development

Scope of the Examination	35
Development of the Examination	35
Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)	36
Criterion-Referenced Scoring	36
Commitment to a Fair, Valid, and Reliable Examination	36

Introduction

Introduction



About this Handbook

This handbook is your most important source of information if you are applying to take the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx). You will find information on eligibility requirements, application procedures, fees, scheduling, exam content, and results. This edition of the handbook supersedes all previous policies and procedures it addresses, as well as all prior representations, whether verbal or written. This handbook cannot cite all applicable rules and circumstances. Therefore, additional FSMTB policies, procedures, and instructions may also apply. The FSMTB reserves the right to modify, amend, or cancel these additional items at any time, with or without notice.

If you have any questions about an examination policy or procedure, please email mblex@fsmtb.org or call 913.681.0380.

We hope you have a positive and successful experience taking the MBLEx as you move toward becoming a licensed professional.



About the MBLEx

The MBLEx provides unified, nationally verified, entry-level standards for the safe and competent practice of massage and bodywork.

The FSMTB administered the first MBLEx in July 2007 during the pilot testing phase of development. Leading massage and bodywork professionals nationwide contributed to the development of the examination. During this development period, FSMTB followed national testing guidelines to ensure a fair, valid, and reliable examination.



Contacting You

The FSMTB will primarily communicate with you through email. If you do not have an email address, FSMTB will communicate with you via U.S. Mail. You are responsible for keeping your contact information up to date. You may make any updates to your contact information in your [FSMTB Exam Service Center](#) account.

If you need to change your personal information (such as your name or date of birth) after submitting your application, please email mblex@fsmtb.org. You must include an explanation of the change and verification, such as a copy of your ID, marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other legal documents.



Privacy & Confidentiality

For security purposes, FSMTB will request identifying information from callers before releasing any information over the phone. For example, FSMTB may request that you provide your date of birth or address. This process helps FSMTB protect your personal information. The FSMTB never releases examination results over the phone.

The FSMTB does not disclose any documentation submitted and received in connection with examination applications and results, except:

- upon written permission from you (the applicant or candidate); or
- as requested by governmental licensing bodies; or
- as required by law.

The FSMTB will not communicate with a third party, such as your school, parent, spouse, or friend, regarding your examination without your written consent.

If you would like to designate a third party to discuss your confidential file and related details with FSMTB, please complete the [Agent Designation Form](#).

For more information, please refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

The MBLEx® Process



STEP 1: Application

Create an account in the FSMTB Exam Service Center online and apply for the MBLEx.



STEP 2: Processing

The FSMTB processes your completed MBLEx application (including education verification) within five business days.



STEP 3: Authorization to Test (ATT)

The FSMTB issues an ATT via email. You must test within the dates shown on the ATT. Your ATT will also be accessible through the Exam Service Center.



STEP 4: Schedule Your MBLEx

Schedule your exam through Pearson VUE online at pearsonvue.com/fsmtb or by calling their toll-free number, 888.790.4892. You can select your test center location, along with the date and time of your exam.



STEP 5: Confirmation

Pearson VUE will email the exam appointment confirmation to you.



STEP 6: Take the MBLEx

It's time to take the MBLEx! After completion, FSMTB will send your official exam result to your designated state licensing board within five business days.

Apply

Application Process



Regulation of Massage Therapy in the United States

Applicants seeking access to the MBLEx acknowledge they are taking the exam to meet regulatory requirements. Currently, most states and territories in the United States regulate the practice of massage therapy. State law dictates the scope of practice and license requirements.

Laws and regulations vary widely between states, so ensure that you understand your state's requirements for practice and licensure before applying for the MBLEx.

Click [here](#) for information about contacting your state's regulatory board or agency.



MBLEx Eligibility

Before applying to take the MBLEx, ensure you meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this handbook. Please check the FSMTB Massage Education Policy for more information.

If you are unable to meet the eligibility requirements or have further questions, please email mblex@fsmtb.org.



Fees

You must pay the MBLEx application fee when you submit your application.

MBLEx application fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

If you need to retake the MBLEx, you must reapply and pay the application fee in effect at the time of reapplication. If you have passed the MBLEx, you cannot retake it unless your state regulatory board or agency approves a retest.

All fees must be paid in U.S. (\$) funds by credit card, certified check, or money order, made payable to FSMTB. FSMTB does not accept personal checks.

By using FSMTB's website and online services, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#). Any subsequent dispute(s) over the charges by you with the credit card authorizer or banking institution without reasonable cause may be considered nonpayment. Such nonpayment may be grounds for FSMTB to impose additional service fees, cancel the product or service purchased, and/or restrict your use of the FSMTB website, programs, and services.



Massage Education Policy

To be eligible for the MBLEx, education verification must be submitted directly to FSMTB by your massage school or education program. An approved massage therapy education program is one that is approved or recognized by the state board or agency authorized to regulate massage therapy in the state where the school is located.

- **If the state massage therapy board or agency does not approve or recognize education programs,** approval or recognition from the relevant state department of education (or a similar agency) in the state where the school is located shall apply.
- **In case of conflict:** If there is a conflict between the state massage therapy board/agency and the Department of Education regarding program approval, the approval or recognition of the massage therapy board/agency shall prevail.
- **If no state-level approval/recognition exists:** If the massage therapy board/agency does not approve or recognize education programs, and there is no approval or recognition from the relevant state department of education (or similar agency) in the state where the school is located, the massage therapy education program must obtain approval directly from FSMTB.

Applicants seeking access to the MBLEx will be required to substantiate either:

- *Enrollment in and having received education and training in all subject areas of the MBLEx Content Outline from an approved massage therapy education program, OR*
- *Graduation from an approved massage therapy education program.*

You do not need to graduate from a massage therapy education program to apply for the MBLEx, provided you meet the enrollment and training criteria above.



Education Verification

In addition to submitting a completed MBLEx application, your school must verify your education through the [Education Verification Center \(EVC\)](#). Once you list your education on your MBLEx application, FSMTB notifies your school via email that education verification is needed. However, you are responsible for ensuring your school completes the verification process.

If your school is closed, please contact your state's department of higher education. When a school or education program closes, documents (such as student transcripts) are often stored in the department's repository of records. If you experience further difficulties obtaining your education records, please contact schoolsupport@fsmtb.org.



Apprenticeship

If you received your massage education through an apprenticeship, you must verify with your state regulatory board or agency that it will consider your education acceptable for licensing before applying to take the MBLEx.

MBLEx applicants who are apprenticed are required to have their mentor submit education records to FSMTB. These records must verify that the applicant has met the FSMTB education requirements for taking the MBLEx.

An MBLEx applicant who has completed an apprenticeship must apply for licensure through their state licensing board or agency before the FSMTB will approve them to take the MBLEx.

FSMTB will verify with the state licensing board or agency that the state has the individual's licensing application before approving the applicant to take the MBLEx.



International Education

If you received your massage education outside of the United States, an independent equivalency evaluation of your massage therapy education and training is required. FSMTB requires all evaluation documents to be in the English language. Please check with your state's requirements, as some states require a specific agency to conduct the evaluation.

You must apply for licensure through your state regulatory board or agency before FSMTB will approve you to take the MBLEx if you received your massage education outside of the United States. FSMTB will verify this with the state licensing board or agency.

If you experience any challenges obtaining your education records, please contact schoolsupport@fsmtb.org.



Exam Language

The FSMTB offers the MBLEx in English and Spanish. You will be able to choose your examination language on your MBLEx application.

Your state may have specific requirements regarding the language of the examination. The language you choose for your test will be included in the exam result report, which FSMTB sends to your state regulatory board after you complete your exam.

Please review your state's requirements, which can be viewed [here](#), before selecting your exam language.

Testing Accommodations

The FSMTB complies with federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The FSMTB will consider accommodation requests from qualified candidates with a diagnosed disability to take the MBLEx. Requests will be considered if they are reasonable, properly documented, and do not fundamentally alter the examination or jeopardize exam security. Candidates are not charged any additional fees for testing accommodations.

Please review the [MBLEx Testing Accommodations Handbook](#) for details about how to request testing accommodations.

How to request testing accommodations when applying for the MBLEx:

1. When completing your online MBLEx application, choose “yes” when asked if you need testing accommodations.
2. New dialogue boxes will open, presenting questions that you must answer.
3. To support your request, you can upload relevant documentation directly to your application. If you do not have that documentation available to upload at that time, you can submit it separately to ada@fsmtb.org.
4. Candidates who are granted testing accommodations will receive an approval notification via email.
5. The FSMTB will release your Authorization to Test (ATT) after receiving your agreement to the approved accommodations, allowing you to schedule your examination appointment.

You cannot request accommodations at the test center. Please send all direct inquiries regarding accommodations to ada@fsmtb.org.

Submitting an accommodations request does not guarantee that FSMTB will grant testing accommodations. The FSMTB reviews each request and the accompanying professional recommendations to determine if the requested accommodations are reasonable and appropriate for the testing environment. The FSMTB will not grant accommodations that would fundamentally alter the nature of the examination.



How to Apply for the MBLEx

Applicants must apply for the MBLEx online by creating an FSMTB Exam Service Center account. You may request printable applications by contacting mblex@fsmtb.org.

Returning candidates who took the test before the implementation of the online service center must register and create an [FSMTB Exam Service Center](#) account.

Please click here for steps on how to create your FSMTB Exam Service Center account, apply for the MBLEx, and check the status of your MBLEx application.



Signature and Acknowledgement

Your signature on your MBLEx application, or your submission of an electronic application, indicates that you understand and agree to certain conditions as part of your application.

Specifically, you acknowledge and agree to the following:

1. You will comply with all FSMTB examination policies and procedures, including the consequences of noncompliance.
2. You attest that you completed the application and that the information contained in the application or connected with your application is true and accurate. If FSMTB determines that any information you provided regarding your application is falsified or inaccurate, FSMTB may deny your application, or your exam result may be invalidated.
3. You authorize FSMTB to obtain additional information about your qualifications and application for testing.
4. You are prohibited from transmitting information about FSMTB examination questions or content by any means (oral, written, electronic, or otherwise), in whole or in part. You understand that failure to comply with this prohibition, or failure to report any information about suspected violations of such prohibitions (by yourself or others) or any possible cheating, can result in:
 - Denial to release examination results.
 - Invalidation of examination results.
 - Suspension from access to the MBLEx and other FSMTB programs and services.
 - Possible legal action against you, including criminal prosecution.
5. MBLEx fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.



FSMTB Online Services

By using FSMTB's website and online services, you agree to the following and the [FSMTB Terms of Use](#):

- All fees for products and services are payable in U.S. dollars, are non-refundable, and are non-transferable.
- All sales of products and services are final, non-returnable, and non-refundable. The FSMTB has sole discretion to make exceptions only in cases of technical complications that the FSMTB causes.
- The FSMTB accepts Visa or Mastercard for online payment for fees, products, or services. Any subsequent dispute(s) over the charges with the credit or debit card authorizer or banking institution may be considered nonpayment. Such nonpayment may be grounds for FSMTB to impose additional service fees (at least a \$25 return fee charged by the card processor), cancel the product or service purchased, restrict your use of the FSMTB website, programs, and services, or notify Member Boards.

Application Review

A complete MBLEx application consists of the **application form**, **the fee**, and **education verification**.



Application Approval

Submission of an application does not guarantee your eligibility to take the MBLEx. Once you submit your MBLEx application, it is valid for six months. During this time, your school must verify your education. FSMTB takes five business days to process completed applications. If your application is not complete within the six-month timeframe, it will expire. If your application expires, you will need to submit a new application and pay the fee.



Insufficient Documentation Notification

You are responsible for making sure FSMTB receives all required information. If your application is incomplete, FSMTB will notify you by email, telephone, or U.S. mail to inform you of any information necessary to complete your application.



Authenticity and Adequacy of Documentation

The FSMTB may verify the authenticity of all documents before determining your eligibility to test. Applying for the MBLEx does not automatically guarantee your eligibility to take the exam.

The following guidelines apply to all information submitted as part of the MBLEx application:

Accuracy is essential. Falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of any required information on the application or in supporting documentation are grounds for:

- Denial of your application
- Invalidation of your MBLEx result
- Suspension of future access to the MBLEx or other FSMTB programs and services
- Notification to state licensing boards

Please be advised that FSMTB may take all relevant factors, including these decisions, into consideration on any future application you submit to sit for the MBLEx. Additionally, FSMTB reserves the right to notify all states of an MBLEx result invalidation.

Consistency is key. All documentation must contain your name exactly as it appears on your application and a numeric identifier, such as your date of birth or Social Security number.

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that FSMTB receives all necessary documentation. The FSMTB is not responsible for lost, undelivered, or misdelivered documents. Therefore, we recommend that you apply online. If you wish to submit written materials, use a traceable form of delivery, such as return receipt requested, USPS Express Mail, First-Class Mail, or Priority Mail with delivery signature confirmation, or a private overnight delivery service like FedEx or UPS.

Approved Applications



Authorization to Test (ATT)

Once FSMTB verifies your education, your completed MBLEEx application will be processed within five business days. After FSMTB approves your application, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter via email. You are responsible for ensuring FSMTB has your current email address on file. Your ATT letter is important as it authorizes you to schedule your exam date.

Do not delay in contacting FSMTB if your education has been verified and you have not received electronic communication from us within five business days of submitting a completed application.

Your ATT includes details on how to schedule your exam with Pearson VUE. You cannot schedule, reschedule, or cancel your exam with FSMTB; you must do so directly with Pearson VUE. Pearson VUE's contact information is listed on your ATT.

You are responsible for reviewing your ATT for accuracy.

The name listed on your ATT must exactly match the name on the two forms of identification you will bring to the test center on the day of your exam. Contact FSMTB immediately at mblex@fsmtb.org before you schedule your examination appointment if you find an error on your ATT. Please note, FSMTB may require documentation to correct the information and reissue your ATT.



ATT Expiration

You must test within the timeframe listed on your ATT. Your ATT will expire if you do not test within this specified time frame. If your ATT expires, you will be required to reapply and comply with all examination policies and fees in place at that time.

The FSMTB will not extend the expiration date of an ATT.

Scheduling



Scheduling Your Exam Appointment

The MBLEx is administered year-round at authorized Pearson VUE test centers across the United States. For the most current test center information, please visit pearsonvue.com/fsmtb.

Once you receive an Authorization to Test (ATT), you will use the information in the ATT to register for the exam date and test center location of your choice.

The FSMTB cannot schedule or change your exam appointment for you. You must contact Pearson VUE to schedule, reschedule, or cancel your exam appointment.

If you have any questions regarding the scheduling process after reviewing this handbook, you may contact our MBLEx Service Support Center at 913.681.0380 or mblex@fsmtb.org, Monday through Friday, 9 am-5 pm CT.



Before You Schedule

- 1. Verify Name Accuracy:** Review the spelling of your name on the ATT. If it does not precisely match the identification you plan to take to the test center, contact FSMTB immediately at mblex@fsmtb.org and provide the correct information. If FSMTB needs to correct an error on your ATT, we may require documentation of the proper information before reissuing your ATT.
- 2. Check Content Accuracy:** Ensure all other information on your ATT is correct.
- 3. Be Prepared to Take the Exam:** The ATT includes the beginning and end dates of the authorization period during which you are eligible to schedule and take your exam. Schedule your exam for a date when you are prepared. Same-day appointments and walk-ins are not permitted.



How to Schedule

To schedule your examination appointment, you may use the online scheduler at pearsonvue.com/fsmtb or call the Pearson VUE Customer Service Call Center at 888.790.4892, Monday through Friday, 7 am-7 pm CT.



Appointment Confirmation Notice

Within 24 hours after you schedule your examination, Pearson VUE will email you a registration confirmation notice with specific information.

If you do not receive an email confirming your exam appointment, contact Pearson VUE, as you may not have completed the scheduling process.



Changing Your Exam Appointment

Within your Authorization to Test (ATT) eligibility window, you may change your test date and/or test center online through pearsonvue.com/fsmtb or by calling the Pearson VUE Customer Service Call Center at 888.790.4892.

Fee for Late Changes: Pearson VUE will charge you a \$50 fee if you cancel or reschedule your exam appointment within 60 days of your existing appointment.

Deadline for Changes: You may make appointment changes up to 24 hours before your existing appointment time.

How to Make Changes: You cannot make changes to your exam appointment by leaving a phone message; you must speak directly with a Pearson VUE scheduling representative if changing by phone. If you change your appointment online, ensure that you complete the entire process and receive an updated confirmation of your appointment.

You will receive a confirmation email from Pearson VUE within 24 hours of making a change.

Take the
MBLEx

Examination Content Outline

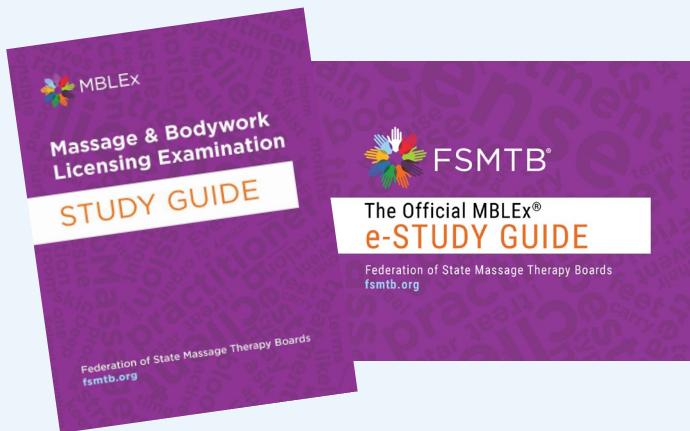
ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY (11%)	PATHOLOGY, CONTRAINDICATIONS, AREAS OF CAUTION, SPECIAL POPULATIONS (14%)	ETHICS, BOUNDARIES, LAWS, REGULATIONS (16%)
<p>A. System structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular • Digestive • Endocrine • Integumentary • Lymphatic & Immune • Musculoskeletal • Nervous • Reproduction • Respiratory • Sensory • Urinary <p>B. System function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cardiovascular ▪ Digestion ▪ Endocrine ▪ Integumentary ▪ Lymphatic & Immune ▪ Musculoskeletal ▪ Nervous ▪ Reproduction ▪ Respiratory ▪ Sensory ▪ Urinary <p>C. Tissue injury and repair</p> <p>D. Concepts of energetic anatomy</p>	<p>A. Overview of Pathologies</p> <p>B. Contraindications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site specific • Pathology related • Special populations • Tools • Special applications <p>C. Areas of caution</p> <p>D. Special populations</p> <p>E. Classes of medications</p> <p>BENEFITS AND EFFECTS OF SOFT TISSUE MANIPULATION (15%)</p> <p>A. Physiological effects of soft tissue manipulation</p> <p>B. Psychological effects of soft tissue manipulation</p> <p>C. Effects of soft tissue manipulation for specific client populations</p> <p>D. Soft tissue techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of strokes • Sequence of application <p>E. Hot/cold applications</p> <p>F. Overview of massage/bodywork modalities</p> <p>CLIENT ASSESSMENT, REASSESSMENT & TREATMENT PLANNING (17%)</p> <p>A. Organization of a massage/bodywork session</p> <p>B. Client consultation and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal intake • Health history form <p>C. Written data collection</p> <p>D. Visual assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Postural • Gait <p>E. Palpation assessment</p> <p>F. Range of motion assessment</p> <p>G. Clinical reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to rule out contraindications • Client treatment goal setting • Evaluation of response to previous treatment • Formulation of treatment strategy 	<p>A. Ethical behavior</p> <p>B. Professional boundaries</p> <p>C. Code of ethics violations</p> <p>D. The therapeutic relationship</p> <p>E. Dual relationships</p> <p>F. Sexual misconduct</p> <p>G. Massage/bodywork-related laws and regulations</p> <p>H. Scope of practice</p> <p>I. Professional communication</p> <p>J. Confidentiality</p> <p>K. Principles</p> <p>GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (15%)</p> <p>A. Proper and safe use of equipment and supplies</p> <p>B. Practitioner hygiene</p> <p>C. Sanitation and cleanliness</p> <p>D. Safety practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities • Practitioner safety • Client safety <p>E. Practitioner care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body mechanics • Personal protective equipment (PPE) • Self-care • Injury prevention <p>F. Draping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and appropriate • Communication <p>G. Business Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business planning • Strategic planning • Office management • Marketing • Hiring/Interviewing • Documentation & Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Client records ▪ Business records <p>H. Healthcare and business terminology</p>

Prepare for the MBLEx



FSMTB Study Resources

The FSMTB provides several study resources to help you prepare for the exam. We also provide several informational videos to help MBLEx candidates prepare to take their exams. You can view those videos [here](#).

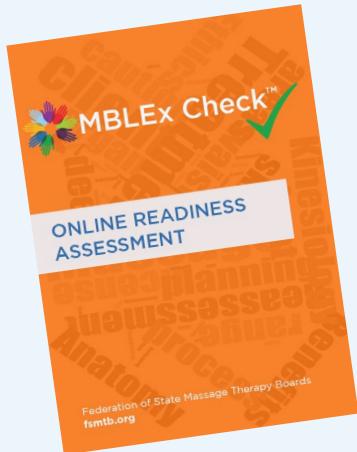


The Official MBLEx Study Guide

The Official MBLEx Study Guide (available in print and digital) is the only study guide created by the same experts who provide the MBLEx.

This guide includes:

- A breakdown of all major content areas covered on the MBLEx
- A 100-question practice exam
- Tips for a successful exam experience



The MBLEx Check

The MBLEx Check is the only practice exam that is offered by the same experts who provide the MBLEx.

This practice exam is:

- An online practice exam that breaks down each of the exam's content areas and features 100 questions
- The only online practice exam designed to simulate the MBLEx experience

[Click here](#) to learn more and access these study tools.

Take the MBLEx



What to Expect at the Test Center

Click [here](#) to view a video on what to expect at the test center.



Test Center Staff

Test center staff will assist you with the check-in process at the test center and will observe examinations in progress. Staff can review test center protocol and procedures, but they cannot answer questions about exam content or provide support for any computer screen prompts. Staff monitor breaks and require biometric verification if you need to leave and reenter the exam room during the examination.

Translators or interpreters are not allowed at any test center. This includes print, electronic, or in-person translators. Test center staff are not authorized to act as translators at any point during the check-in and testing process. Furthermore, you may not bring a translator to translate for you during any part of the examination appointment, including check-in. If you are unable to complete the check-in process due to a language barrier without a translator, you will be turned away from the test center.



Report Time and Check-In

You must arrive at the test center AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE your scheduled appointment time to sign in and complete check-in procedures.

These procedures include a digital photograph and biometric security measures, such as palm vein recognition.

You are not permitted to leave the building during the examination.



Lateness on the Day of the Exam

You must arrive at the report time indicated (at least 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment) as stated on your appointment confirmation notice. If you arrive late, you will not be permitted to take your exam and will be considered a no-show.

If you are late and miss your exam, your Authorization to Test (ATT) will expire. If you choose to reapply for the MBLEx, you will be subject to all application and fee requirements in effect at the time of reapplication.



Absences on the Day of the Exam

The FSMTB is responsible for all associated exam delivery costs for an applicant, regardless of whether the applicant takes the test or not. If you do not show up for your exam appointment for any reason, your Authorization to Test (ATT) will expire. If you choose to reapply to take the MBLEx, you must pay the fee in effect at the time of reapplication. There are no exceptions to this policy; it applies in all circumstances.



Inclement Weather

In the event of severe weather or natural disasters, Pearson VUE will determine if test centers must close. If the test center remains open, your examination will not be rescheduled due to weather. You may contact the Pearson VUE Customer Service Call Center at 888.790.4892 to determine if your test center is closed.

If Pearson VUE cancels your examination due to a test center closure, they will email you instructions to reschedule. You will not be charged additional exam fees if Pearson VUE cancels your exam.

The FSMTB is not responsible for any personal or third-party expenses (e.g., travel, food, and lodging) you incur because your exam was canceled, including cancellations due to severe weather and emergencies.



Required Identification

You must bring TWO forms of identification (ID) to the test center on your exam date. The format and spelling of your name on both IDs must exactly match the format and spelling on your MBLEx application and your Authorization to Test (ATT).

PRIMARY ID MUST:

- Contain your **photograph**
- Contain your **signature**
- **Not be expired**
- Be **government-issued**

Acceptable Primary IDs:

- **Government-issued U.S. State / Territory Driver's License**
(Note: Temporary or renewal paperwork and digital licenses/IDs are NOT acceptable)
- **Government-issued U.S. State / Territory ID**
(Note: Temporary or renewal paperwork and digital licenses/IDs are NOT acceptable)
- **Government-issued Passport / U.S. Certificate of Naturalization**
- **Military ID**

SECONDARY ID MUST:

- Contain your **signature**
(see exceptions at right)
- **Not be expired**

Acceptable Secondary IDs:

- **U.S. Social Security Card** (must be signed)
- **Military ID** containing a chip or bar code but no signature (exception to the signature requirement)
- **Employment Authorization Document** (EAD card) with bar code but no signature (exception to signature requirement)
- Signed **employee ID / work badge / school ID**
- Signed bank-issued **credit card, ATM, or debit card**
- Any **ID** on the primary list (if not used as primary)
- **Alien Registration number**
(green card or permanent resident visa)
(must be signed if a signature line is present)

Your middle name or initial is not a required field on the MBLEx application. You will not be prevented from testing if your middle name or initial appears on your MBLEx application or IDs, as long as the first and last names match exactly.

If the test center staff have questions about your ID, they may ask you for additional proof of identity. You will be refused access to the examination if you cannot prove your identity to their satisfaction.

Admission to the test center and access to the examination do not imply that your identification is authentic. This does not preclude subsequent invalidation of your MBLEx results if FSMTB later determines misrepresentation, impersonation, forgery, or fraud occurred. Using a fake ID to enter the test center puts you at risk of exam result invalidation.

Click [here](#) for a video that outlines identification requirements.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Driver's license renewal or temporary paperwork and digital licenses or state IDs are NOT acceptable forms of ID.



Lockers

Lockers are provided at the test center for you to store a small number of personal belongings. You must leave all personal items in the locker before taking your exam. The FSMTB is not responsible for any items that are lost or stolen at the test center.

Suppose you possess prohibited items in the testing room or access your locker during the examination (whether inside or outside of the testing room, excluding approved breaks for items like medication). In that case, you will not be allowed to continue your examination. This will result in a failing result due to an incomplete examination. The FSMTB reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited item.



Prohibited Items

The only items you are allowed to take into the test room are your two pieces of identification and your locker key. Anything else is prohibited. Cell phone access is strictly prohibited at all times while at the test center, including during breaks.

Items that you CANNOT take into the testing room include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Backpack or bag
- Beverage of any kind
- Bluetooth devices of any kind
- Books or textbooks
- Briefcase or other luggage
- Calculator
- Calendar, day planner, or another organizer
- Camera of any kind
- Car or house keys
- Cellphone or smartphone
- Cigarettes or tobacco products
- Coat, jacket, gloves (*unless worn for medical reasons and approved as an accommodation*)
- Computers of any kind
- Cup or container of any kind
- Digital scanning or imaging device, stick, or pen
- Earplugs (*unless FSMTB-approved as an accommodation; sound-dampening headphones may be provided by the test center*)
- E-cigarettes or gum
- Electronic device of any kind
- Electronic, print, or live translators
- Eyeglasses case
- Food or snacks of any kind (*unless approved as an accommodation*)
- Good luck charms
- Gum
- Hat, cap, visor, or head covering (*unless worn for religious or medical reasons, approved as an accommodation, and visually inspected*)
- The test center may provide sound-dampening headphones; however, personal headphones or earphones must be approved by FSMTB as an accommodation.
- Large jewelry of any kind
- Magazine
- Notebook
- Notes in any form
- Outline
- Pager
- Paper of any kind
- Paper or electronic dictionary
- Pens, pencils, erasers
- Pencil sharpener
- Plastic bag
- Purse or handbag
- Radio transmitter or receiver
- Recording device or player
- Ruler or slide rule
- Study materials of any kind
- Sunglasses (*unless prescribed and approved as an accommodation*)
- Umbrella
- USB storage device
- Video recording device of any kind
- Wallet or clutch
- Watch of any kind
- Weapon of any kind, including a pocket knife



Test Length and Time Allowed

The MBLEx is a computer-based test that requires you to answer 100 multiple-choice questions. Your exam appointment is scheduled for two (2) hours (120 minutes). This total time is allocated as follows:

- **Security and Confidentiality Agreement:** Maximum of five (5) minutes
- **MBLEx Information Survey:** Maximum of five (5) minutes
- **Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx):** 110 minutes for 100 questions

IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE ALL 100 ITEMS within the allotted 110 minutes, you will fail the exam.



Pre-Exam Modules

You have a limited time to complete the Security and Confidentiality Agreement and the Information Survey. Writing on the erasable note board provided by the test center during this pre-exam time is not permitted. If you attempt to write on the erasable note board before the timed examination (the 100 questions) begins, the proctor will take away the note board and escort you out of the testing room. You will not be allowed to take the MBLEx. You will then need to reapply for the exam and pay the full fee again.



Examination Breaks

There are no scheduled breaks during the 110-minute examination period unless FSMTB approved a break as a specific testing accommodation during your MBLEx application process.

If you take an unscheduled break during the examination, you do so on your own time. The examination clock does not stop if you take an unscheduled break. Security protocols will be in effect as you exit and reenter the testing room; please note that there is no time adjustment for these security checks.



Exam Administration Conditions

If you experience any issues while taking your exam (e.g., technical problems, disruptive environment), it is your responsibility to notify a test center proctor immediately during the exam and before you leave the test center.

You must also notify FSMTB in writing about your experience and any unresolved concerns at the test center so we can take appropriate action. We will investigate and verify the incident. Please send your written report to mblex@fsmtb.org within two (2) business days after your examination date.

Results

Examination Results



Examination Results Reported as PASS or FAIL.

The state regulatory board or agency you indicated on your MBLEx application will receive an official examination result electronically from FSMTB within five business days of your exam date. If you are successful on the exam, you can then apply for a license in that jurisdiction.



Passing MBLEx results

Passing results support an application for licensure to practice massage/bodywork in a regulated jurisdiction. Passing the MBLEx does not result in a certification or credential of any kind, nor does submitting your MBLEx result to your state regulatory board or agency automatically begin the licensing process. Before you can legally practice, you must apply for a license through your state regulatory board or agency and meet all of your state's specific requirements.

Suppose you have a previous passing result on the MBLEx that does not meet current state regulatory requirements. In that case, you may retest only with written permission from that state regulatory board or agency.



Failing MBLEx results

If you fail the MBLEx, the test center will provide you a diagnostic report of your performance in each MBLEx content area. The indicators on this diagnostic summary are provided to assist you in future study efforts. For information on how to retake the MBLEx, please refer to the [Retaking the MBLEx](#) section of this handbook.



Result Transfers

To ensure MBLEx candidates are in control of their private and confidential MBLEx results, FSMTB will transfer examination results only to:

- Massage therapy regulatory boards/agencies (official result) OR
- The MBLEx candidate (unofficial result)

Result Transfer Forms (RTFs) requesting that MBLEx results be sent to recipients other than the above will not be processed, and no refunds will be granted. RTFs should be submitted online via the candidate's FSMTB exam account and will incur a fee of \$40.

The FSMTB will resend an exam result to the same state at no additional cost for up to three months from the original send date. After three months, resending to the same state will require another completed Result Transfer Form and the applicable fee.

Retaking the MBLEx



Reapplying for the Exam

If you failed the MBLEx or missed your exam appointment for any reason, you must reapply to retake the exam. The following conditions apply:

- **New Application and Fee:** To retake the MBLEx, you must submit a new application and pay the applicable fee at the time of submission.
- **Update Information:** You must notify FSMTB of any changes to your personal information, such as name or address, or any new accommodation requests when submitting a new application.
- **Education Verification:** If FSMTB has already verified your education, no further action is typically needed from your school unless FSMTB specifically requests it.
- **Testing Accommodations:** If you previously tested with accommodations, please refer to the [MBLEx Testing Accommodations Handbook](#) for details on how to reapply with accommodations.



How Many Times Can I Take the MBLEx?

The FSMTB does not limit the number of times you may take the MBLEx. However, your state regulatory board or agency may impose such a limit.

Check with your state regulatory board or agency to determine if they have a limit on the number of times you may attempt to pass the MBLEx for licensure in that state.

If you have previously passed the MBLEx but are directed by a state regulatory board or agency to retake the exam (for example, if your previous result is no longer valid for that state's requirements), you must obtain written approval from that state regulatory board or agency to retest. You must forward this written approval letter to FSMTB before submitting a new application to take the MBLEx.



Candidate Care

The FSMTB values feedback about the examination process. We can discuss study strategies or exam preparation with you. If you would like more information or support, please email mblex@fsmtb.org.

Get Licensed

Get Licensed

You must apply for a license with your state's regulatory board or agency.

The license to legally practice is issued by state regulatory boards or agencies, not by FSMTB. It is your responsibility to meet all state licensure requirements.

Click [here](#) for a list of state regulatory board websites.

Even if you receive a passing result on the MBLEx, it does NOT mean that you are licensed to practice. You may not represent or advertise yourself as licensed until you receive official notification of licensure from the state regulatory board or agency in the jurisdiction where you wish to practice.

For future needs, licensed practitioners should return to the FSMTB website for access to continuing education options. Please click [here](#) for more information on the FSMTB Continuing Education Registry (CE Registry™) and Regulatory Education and Competence Hub (REACH™).



Reporting MBLEx Results to State Licensing Boards

The FSMTB's role in the licensing process is to report your exam result to your designated state regulatory board or agency. For license-related deadlines, please check directly with the state to which you are applying for a license.

When FSMTB reports your official MBLEx result to the state that you have designated, it is reported along with the identification and educational information that you provided to FSMTB on your application. This process ensures that your exam result is matched correctly to the licensing application you submit to the state. State licensing boards and agencies will contact FSMTB if discrepancies are found in the information when they compare your MBLEx result file with your application for licensure.

In the event of a discrepancy or inaccuracy that calls into question your eligibility to take the MBLEx, FSMTB may request that you submit documentation to verify or otherwise substantiate the information that you provided on your MBLEx application.

If FSMTB determines that any of the information on your MBLEx application is inaccurate, misrepresented, or falsified, FSMTB reserves the right to:

- **Invalidate** your MBLEx result.
- **Suspend** your future access to the MBLEx or other FSMTB programs and services.
- **Impose** other conditions for your access to the MBLEx.

The FSMTB also reserves the right to impose fees to offset any administrative or legal costs associated with the investigation and/or adjudication of such a case.

About the Exam

Notice to MBLEx Applicants Regarding Exam Irregularities, Misconduct, and Fraud

The MBLEx is the property of FSMTB and is protected by U.S. copyright laws. It is illegal to copy or share information about MBLEx questions, whether in conversation or recalled from memory, as this constitutes unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.

When you apply to take the MBLEx, you agree to maintain the confidentiality and security of the exam questions, answer choices, and content.

You are required to acknowledge that you understand and agree to the following:

1. The MBLEx is the exclusive property of the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB).
2. The MBLEx and the items contained therein are protected by United States copyright law.
3. No part of the MBLEx may be copied, reproduced, or transmitted to any other person, in part or in whole, by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
4. The theft or attempted theft of the MBLEx, in part or in whole, is punishable as a felony.
5. Copying, reproducing, memorizing, or transmitting MBLEx content in whole or in part by any means (oral, written, electronic, or otherwise) is forbidden.



Fraudulent Documents

In the event of a fraudulent application, submission of fraudulent documents, inaccuracies, misrepresentations, or discrepancies; the introduction of fraud at any point in the application process; sharing exam content after your exam administration; advance access to exam content before your exam administration (exam irregularities); or violation of any FSMTB and test site rules, policies, or procedures, FSMTB reserves the right to impose fees. These fees are to offset any administrative or legal costs associated with the investigation and/or adjudication of the case.



MBLEx Result Invalidations

Violation of any FSMTB examination policy or Pearson VUE test center rule may be grounds for FSMTB to invalidate a candidate's MBLEx result.

In the event of an examination policy violation or other application or exam irregularity, FSMTB will request that you submit correspondence addressing the policy violation and any documentation supporting your position. The FSMTB will then review all information received and available to determine the necessary action(s). Such actions may include, but are not limited to, the invalidation of your MBLEx result and/or suspension of your future access to the MBLEx or other FSMTB programs and services. The FSMTB will notify all state licensing boards of all MBLEx result invalidations.



Exam Irregularities and Cheating

Your participation in any irregularity occurring before, during, or after the examination may be sufficient cause for FSMTB, at its sole discretion, to take appropriate action.

Such irregularities include, but are not limited to:

- Giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis.
- Any other examination irregularity.
- Failure to report any information about any irregularity or any suspected irregularity.

Appropriate actions by FSMTB may include terminating your participation in the exam, invalidating the results of your examination, seeking monetary compensation, or taking other measures.

The MBLEx is protected by U.S. copyright law. The FSMTB reserves the right to enforce consequences applicable when it discovers violations and infractions of such laws. The FSMTB will provide candidates with due process in all such cases.

The FSMTB provides a [video explaining examination security](#) which can be viewed at fsmtb.org. All candidates are advised to access the video before taking the examination.

Examination Development



Scope of the Examination

Examination questions are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of facts and their ability to apply judgment. The MBLEx does not contain trick or ambiguous questions.

Given the diversity of the massage and bodywork field, there may be a small number of questions that fall outside the specific training of every individual candidate. This will vary from person to person depending on one's particular training. However, the number of these questions is not significant enough to pose a barrier to passing the MBLEx. Qualified candidates who possess the requisite education and training should pass the examination.



Development of the Examination

The FSMTB develops the MBLEx through a multi-stage process designed to ensure the exam reflects current, real-world practice. Because massage/bodywork is a diverse field practiced in various ways across the United States, FSMTB makes every effort to involve educators and practitioners who are broadly representative of the profession. In developing and maintaining the MBLEx, FSMTB is committed to respecting the wide range of massage and bodywork modalities and conducts periodic reviews to keep the exam aligned with current practice standards as shown in the exam development stages below.

STAGE 1: Job Task Analysis

In the first stage, a panel of expert practitioners from various traditions and schools of thought in the massage and bodywork field outlines a job analysis. These outlines describe the functions a practitioner performs and the knowledge needed to perform those functions. The FSMTB then validates the job analysis by surveying practitioners throughout the United States. Several thousand practitioners typically participate in each Job Task Analysis (JTA) Survey, which FSMTB conducts every five to seven years. The [MBLEx Content Outline](#) is created from these survey results.

STAGE 2: Question Writing and Review (Ongoing)

The second stage of development is ongoing and involves collaborating with other representative groups of practitioners across the country to write questions based on the MBLEx Content Outline. A committee of subject matter experts reviews these new questions. The questions are also edited to ensure they are written and that there is only one correct answer to each question.



Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)

The MBLEx consists of 100 questions and is a fixed-length, computer-adaptive test (CAT).

When taking the MBLEx, you must answer each question in the order it is presented. Additionally, you must complete all questions within the allotted time; failure to do so will result in a failed exam.

With CAT, when you answer a question correctly, the next question presented is slightly more complex. The complexity of the questions presented continues to increase until you answer a question incorrectly. Then, a less complex question is presented. In this way, the exam adapts to your ability level.

Click [here](#) to watch a video explaining Computer Adaptive Testing.



Criterion-Referenced Scoring

The FSMTB Board of Directors adopts the passing standard for the MBLEx. This adoption is based on a recommendation from subject matter experts working under the direction of professionals in testing and psychometrics. The criteria define the minimum acceptable level of competence required for the safe and effective practice of massage and bodywork.

The passing standard is determined by a criterion-referenced method, which is a common approach used in licensing examinations. A criterion-referenced passing standard applies minimum standards for competent practice to all candidates.

The criterion-referenced standard-setting process begins by establishing a minimum acceptable level of competence that candidates must possess to pass the examination, ensuring safe practice. A group of licensed practitioners (representing various aspects of the practice, geographic areas, and levels of expertise) achieves this standard setting. To ensure that the description of the profession accurately describes the job tasks of practitioners entering the profession, FSMTB always includes input from entry-level practitioners in this process.



Commitment to a Fair, Valid, and Reliable Examination

The FSMTB contracts with an independent professional examination agency for the ongoing development and psychometric analyses of the MBLEx. Pearson VUE, the global leader in electronic testing for regulatory and other credentialing boards, is the professional testing agency FSMTB has contracted to assist in the administration, scoring, and reporting of the MBLEx. With the world's largest network of test centers, innovative technology, and a commitment to excellent customer service, Pearson VUE provides a superior testing experience to candidates.



The FSMTB is a fully autonomous, non-profit organization established in 2005. It operates under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All revenue collected by the organization is used to enhance FSMTB programs, improve the quality of its examinations and services, and provide support to its Member Boards in fulfilling their responsibility of protecting the public. Our mission is to support our Member Boards in their work to ensure that the practice of massage therapy is provided to the public safely and competently.

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

7300 College Boulevard, Suite 650
Overland Park, KS 66210

MBLEx Support Center

913.681.0380 | mblex@fsmtb.org

FSMTB Executive Office

913.681.0380 | info@fsmtb.org

fsmtb.org