



Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Candidate Handbook

**Federation of State Massage Therapy
Boards**

fsmtb.org • Effective September 17, 2026



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Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

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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. FSMTB reserves the right to modify, amend, or cancel these additional items at any time, with or without notice.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Read the entire handbook before you apply. When this handbook addresses a policy that applies to your situation, this edition has the most current information. Other FSMTB policies, procedures, or instructions may also apply when this handbook does not address a specific rule or circumstance.*

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.

FSMTB administered the first MBLEx in July 2007 during the pilot testing phase. 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

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 Examination Account](#).

If you need to change your personal information (such as your name, date of birth, or email address) 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. FSMTB never releases examination results over the phone.

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.

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

For more information, please refer to [FSMTB's Privacy Policy](#).

MBLEx Requirements and 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.

For information about contacting your state's regulatory board or agency, visit fsmtb.org.



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.

You must meet all of the following requirements to take the MBLEx:

- Submit a complete MBLEx application with the required fee.
- Ensure your massage education program verifies your education directly with FSMTB.
- Acknowledge and agree that you will follow FSMTB examination policies.

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



MBLEx Education Policy

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 program; or
- Graduation from an approved massage therapy education program. Substantiation documentation must be submitted to FSMTB directly from the 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 in which the school is located.

If the massage therapy board/agency does not approve or recognize education programs, FSMTB shall make the determination as to whether the massage education program meets [MBLEx eligibility requirements](#).

WHAT THIS MEANS: *FSMTB determines whether you are eligible to take the MBLEx. State licensing boards and agencies determine whether you meet the licensure requirements. Some states may require graduation or completion of a massage therapy education program before issuing a license.*



Education Verification

In addition to submitting a completed MBLEx application and the required fee, your massage therapy education program must verify your education through the [Education Verification Center \(EVC\)](#).

You are responsible for making sure your school completes the verification process.

If your school is closed, you will need to contact the custodian of records for that school and request that transcripts be sent directly to FSMTB via email to schoolsupport@fsmtb.org.

When a school or educational program closes, student records are often stored with a records custodian, the state department of higher education, or a similar repository. If you have questions about education verification or difficulty obtaining your education records, contact schoolsupport@fsmtb.org.

FSMTB will not finalize your MBLEx application until FSMTB receives your application fee and education verification. Please allow five (5) business days for FSMTB to process your complete MBLEx application. A complete application consists of the MBLEx application, fee, and education verification.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Your school or education program must send the verification directly to FSMTB. Documents submitted only by the applicant do not complete the education verification requirement unless FSMTB specifically instructs otherwise.*



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 or sponsor submit education records directly 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 FSMTB approves 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 English. Please check 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

FSMTB offers the MBLEx in English and Spanish. You may 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 before selecting your exam language.



Fees

The MBLEx application fee is \$265 and must be paid when you submit your application. MBLEx application fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable. This policy applies to all applicants and all circumstances.

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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Application fees cannot be refunded, transferred to another person, or transferred to a different application or exam. Review your application carefully before you submit payment.*

Information about the [Veterans Affairs Reimbursement Program](#) is available at fsmtb.org.



Testing Accommodations

FSMTB complies with federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). FSMTB will accommodate requests from qualified candidates with a diagnosed disability.

To be granted accommodations to take the MBLEx, the request must be reasonable, properly documented, and cannot fundamentally alter the examination or jeopardize exam security. Candidates are not charged any additional fees for testing accommodations.

Submission of an accommodations request does not guarantee that testing accommodations will be made. FSMTB will review your request and professional recommendations to determine whether the accommodation is reasonable, appropriate to the testing environment, and would not fundamentally alter the nature of the examination.

Please review the **MBLEx ADA Supplement** for details on requesting testing accommodations. Candidates requesting accommodations are responsible for reading both this Candidate Handbook and the MBLEx ADA Supplement. The ADA Supplement does not replace this Candidate Handbook; it supplements the handbook for candidates requesting accommodations.

To request testing accommodations, follow the prompts when completing the MBLEx application. If you require accommodations during the application process, contact FSMTB for assistance.

Please email ADA-specific questions to ada@fsmtb.org.

FSMTB may request a **Health Care Information Form** when additional information or verification is needed from your treating health care provider. The form is not required in all cases and does not preclude you from submitting other appropriate documentation.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Request accommodations during the application process and provide supporting documentation as early as possible. Test center staff cannot approve accommodations on exam day.*

How to Apply for the MBLEx

Candidates may apply for the MBLEx online.



Create Your Exam Account

To apply for the MBLEx online, create an [FSMTB Examination Account](#). Through your account, you can apply for the MBLEx, check your application status, submit documentation needed to resolve application discrepancies, or submit a transfer request to send your MBLEx result to a state licensing board or agency.



Submit Application and Payment

Log in to your [FSMTB Examination Account](#) using your username and password, then complete your MBLEx application. Applications are not considered complete until payment is received. FSMTB accepts Visa or Mastercard for online payments for fees, products, or services. All MBLEx application fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.



Submit Education Verification

It is your responsibility to ensure that FSMTB receives your education verification. Please contact your school to let them know you applied for the MBLEx so they can verify your education through the Education Verification Center (EVC).



Authorization to Test (ATT)

Once your application is approved, FSMTB will email you an Authorization to Test (ATT) with instructions for scheduling your examination online or by phone with Pearson VUE. You can also log in to your [FSMTB Examination Account](#) to see your ATT. You must complete the exam within the date range on your ATT. If you do not test before the expiration date on your ATT, it will expire, and you will be required to reapply as a new applicant.



Signature and Acknowledgment

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.

By submitting your complete MBLEx application, you acknowledge that you have reviewed the MBLEx Content Outline and verify that you have both education and training in the examination content areas. Additionally, you acknowledge and agree to comply with all FSMTB examination policies and procedures, including the consequences of noncompliance.

Specifically, you acknowledge and agree to the following:

- You will comply with all FSMTB examination policies and procedures, including the consequences of noncompliance.

- 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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Check your application carefully before you submit it. Incorrect, incomplete, or false information can affect your current application, your exam result, and future access to FSMTB programs and services.*

- You authorize FSMTB to obtain additional information about your qualifications and application for testing.
- 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 of release of examination results, invalidation of examination results, suspension from access to the MBLEx and other FSMTB programs and services, and possible legal action against you, including criminal prosecution.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Do not copy, memorize, discuss, post, or share exam questions, answer choices, or exam content before, during, or after the exam.*

- MBLEx fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.



FSMTB Online Services

Through your [FSMTB Examination Account](#), you can apply for the MBLEx, check your application status, submit documentation needed to resolve application discrepancies, or submit a transfer request to send your MBLEx results to a state licensing board or agency.

To create your FSMTB Examination Account:

- Select the [Create Exam Account](#) button at fsmtb.org.
- Provide the required information on the registration page and choose your password. Your password must be at least eight characters and contain at least one number, one special character, one lowercase letter, and one uppercase letter.
- After completing the form, click Submit.
- You will receive an automatic email to verify your account. You must complete this verification step before you can log in.
- Log in using your username and password.

FSMTB recommends using Google Chrome when registering for and logging in to your [FSMTB Examination Account](#).

By using FSMTB's website and online services, you agree to the following and to 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. FSMTB has sole discretion to make exceptions only in cases of technical complications caused by FSMTB.
- 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 purchased product or service, 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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Your application is not complete until FSMTB has your application, fee, and education verification.*



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

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 invalidation of an MBLEx result.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Make sure your application and documents are accurate, complete, and consistent. Errors, omissions, or false information can have consequences beyond the current application.*

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. 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.

Exam Preparation



Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination Content Outline

Find the Examination Content Outline at fsmtb.org

Anatomy & Physiology (11%)

- A. System structure: *Cardiovascular; Digestive; Endocrine; Integumentary; Lymphatic and immune; Musculoskeletal; Nervous; Reproduction; Respiratory; Sensory; Urinary.*
- B. System function: *Cardiovascular; Digestion; Endocrine; Integumentary; Lymphatic and immune; Musculoskeletal; Nervous; Reproduction; Respiratory; Sensory; Urinary.*
- C. Tissue injury and repair.
- D. Concepts of energetic anatomy.

Kinesiology (12%)

- A. Skeletal muscle components and characteristics.
- B. Concepts of skeletal muscle contractions.
- C. Proprioceptors.
- D. Skeletal muscle locations, attachments (origins, insertions), and actions.
- E. Joint structure and function.
- F. Range of motion: Active; Passive; Resisted.

Pathology, Contraindications, Areas of Caution, Special Populations (14%)

- A. Overview of pathologies.
- B. Contraindications: *Site-specific; Pathology related; Special populations; Tools; Special applications.*
- C. Areas of caution.
- D. Special populations.
- E. Classes of medications.

Benefits and Effects of Soft Tissue Manipulation (15%)

- A. Physiological effects of soft tissue manipulation.
- B. Psychological effects of soft tissue manipulation.
- C. Effects of soft tissue manipulation for specific client populations.
- D. Soft tissue techniques: *Types of strokes; Sequence of application.*
- E. Hot and cold applications.
- F. Overview of massage/bodywork modalities.

Client Assessment, Reassessment, and Treatment Planning (17%)

- A. Organization of a massage/bodywork session.
- B. Client consultation and evaluation: Verbal intake; Health history form.
- C. Written data collection.
- D. Visual assessment: *General; Postural; Gait.*
- E. Palpation assessment.
- F. Range of motion assessment.
- G. Clinical reasoning: *Ability to rule out contraindications; Client treatment goal setting; Evaluation of response to previous treatment; Formulation of treatment strategy.*

Ethics, Boundaries, Laws, and Regulations (16%)

- A. Ethical behavior.
- B. Professional boundaries.
- C. Code of ethics violations.
- D. The therapeutic relationship.
- E. Dual relationships.
- F. Sexual misconduct.
- G. Massage/bodywork-related laws and regulations.
- H. Scope of practice.
- I. Professional communication.
- J. Confidentiality.
- K. Principles.

Guidelines for Professional Practice (15%)

- A. Proper and safe use of equipment and supplies.
- B. Practitioner hygiene.
- C. Sanitation and cleanliness.
- D. Safety practices: *Facilities; Practitioner safety; Client safety.*
- E. Practitioner care: *Body mechanics; Personal protective equipment (PPE); Self-care; Injury prevention.*
- F. Draping: *Safe and appropriate; Communication.*
- G. Business practices: *Business planning; Strategic planning; Office management; Marketing; Hiring/interviewing; Documentation and records; Client records; Business records.*
- H. Healthcare and business terminology.

Percent distribution is approximate. (c) FSMTB 2023.

FSMTB Study Resources

FSMTB provides several study resources to help candidates prepare for the exam, as well as informational videos on the MBLEx, exam security, and computer-adaptive testing. Current details, pricing, availability, and access links are available at fsmtb.org.

The Official MBLEx Study Guide

The [Official MBLEx Study Guide](#) is the printed version of FSMTB's study guide for candidates preparing for the MBLEx.

The printed Study Guide includes:

- a breakdown of the major content areas covered on the MBLEx;
- a 100-question practice exam; and
- tips for a successful exam experience.

The Official MBLEx e-Study Guide

The [Official MBLEx e-Study Guide](#) is published by FSMTB and developed to help candidates prepare for the MBLEx. It provides study information in a digital format and is available in English and Spanish. Access to the e-Study Guide is available for one year from the date of purchase. Updates are included during the access period.

The e-Study Guide includes:

- a breakdown of the major content areas covered on the MBLEx;
- a 100-question practice exam with answers; and
- tips for a successful exam experience.

The MBLEx Check

The [MBLEx Check](#) provides candidates with a timed practice experience using questions aligned with the MBLEx Content Outline.

The MBLEx Check:

- includes 100 practice questions;
- follows the same percentage distribution as the MBLEx Content Outline;
- is timed;
- allows candidates to see which questions they answered correctly and incorrectly after completion; and

FSMTB will continue to review, update, and improve the MBLEx Check to support candidates better as they prepare for the examination.

[MBLEx preparation videos](#) are available at fsmtb.org.



Identification Requirements

The format and spelling of your name must match your MBLEx application, your Authorization to Test (ATT), and the identification you present at the test center. You must bring two forms of identification (ID) to the test center on your exam date: one primary ID and one secondary ID.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Review the ID requirements before you apply and before you schedule. If the name on your ID does not match your application and ATT, contact FSMTB before your exam date.

ID CATEGORY	REQUIREMENT	EXAMPLES AND NOTES
Primary ID	<i>Original, physical, valid, unexpired government-issued photo ID. A primary ID may be a card or passport. If the ID includes a signature line, it must be signed.</i>	Driver's license, including temporary, limited-term, restricted, or intermediate driver's license if issued as a physical card; state/territory ID card; learner's permit or instruction permit if issued as a physical government-issued photo ID card; passport or passport card; U.S. Certificate of Naturalization; military ID; Permanent Resident Card/Green Card; Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
Secondary ID	<i>Original, valid, unexpired ID that contains your name and signature.</i>	Signed Social Security card; signed employee ID, work badge, or school ID; signed bank-issued credit card, ATM card, or debit card; any primary ID not used as the primary ID if it contains a signature.
Not accepted	<i>Documents or images that cannot reliably verify identity for MBLEx admission.</i>	Photocopies; screenshots; photos of ID; printed DMV receipts; renewal paperwork; paper temporary licenses or paper temporary IDs; expired IDs; IDs marked clipped, voided, suspended, revoked, canceled, or otherwise invalid.
Digital IDs	<i>Digital IDs are not accepted as standard practice for the MBLEx.</i>	Pearson may accept a government-issued digital ID only when acceptance is required by applicable law in the country or region where you are testing, and Pearson has completed its required validation process. If this applies, follow Pearson instructions for that testing location.

Temporary and Limited Driver Credentials: A temporary driver's license, limited-term license, restricted license, intermediate license, learner's permit, or instruction permit may be accepted only when the credential is an original, physical, government-issued photo ID card and meets all other applicable ID requirements. *We do not accept printed or paper temporary documents, even if issued by a government agency.*

Signature Requirements for Government-Issued Photo IDs: A government-issued photo ID may qualify as a primary ID even if it has no signature field, as long as it is original, physical, valid, unexpired, and meets all other primary ID requirements. If the ID includes a signature line or signature field, it must be signed to be accepted.

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 your first and last names match exactly.

If 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 result if FSMTB later determines that misrepresentation, impersonation, forgery, or fraud occurred. Using a fake ID to enter the test center puts you at risk of exam result invalidation.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Completing the test center check-in does not prevent FSMTB from reviewing ID concerns later.

A video outlining [identification requirements](https://www.fsmtb.org/identification-requirements) is available at [fsmtb.org](https://www.fsmtb.org).

Approved Applications and Scheduling



Authorization to Test (ATT)

Once FSMTB verifies your education, your completed MBLEx 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.

Your ATT is also available in your [FSMTB Examination Account](#). To check the status of your MBLEx application, log in to your [FSMTB Examination Account](#).

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

Your ATT includes instructions for scheduling your exam with Pearson. You cannot schedule, reschedule, or cancel your exam with FSMTB; you must do so directly with Pearson. Pearson'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 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.

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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Schedule and take your exam before the ATT expires. If it expires, you must apply and pay again.*



Scheduling Your Exam Appointment

The MBLEx is administered year-round at authorized Pearson Professional 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.

You will need to create a Pearson account to schedule your exam. This account is separate from your FSMTB Examination Account.

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

If you have questions about scheduling after reading this handbook, contact the MBLEx Service Support Center at 913.681.0380 or mblex@fsmtb.org, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. CT.



Before You Schedule

1. **Verify Name Accuracy:** Review the spelling of your name on the ATT. If it does not exactly 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, documentation of the correct information may be required before your ATT is reissued.
2. **Check Content Accuracy:** Ensure that 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 Pearson customer service at 888.790.4892, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. CT.



Appointment Confirmation Notice

Once you have scheduled your MBLEx, Pearson will email you an appointment confirmation immediately. If you do not receive confirmation of your appointment from Pearson, there may have been an error in scheduling. Please contact Pearson at 888.790.4892 to resolve the problem.



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 Pearson customer service at 888.790.4892.

Fee for Late Changes: Pearson 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 scheduling representative if changing by phone. If you change your appointment online, ensure you complete the entire process and receive an updated confirmation.

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

Take the MBLEx



What to Expect at the Test Center

Visit fsmtb.org to view videos about what to expect at the test center, exam security, and computer adaptive testing.



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 Pearson test center at least 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to sign in and complete check-in procedures. You must arrive by the report time listed on your appointment confirmation notice. These procedures include a digital photograph and palm vein recognition as a biometric security measure.

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



Lateness on the Day of the Exam

You must arrive at the indicated report time (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

FSMTB is responsible for all exam delivery costs for an applicant, regardless of whether the applicant takes the test. 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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *If you miss your exam appointment for any reason, you must reapply and pay the fee to take the MBLEx again.*



Inclement Weather

In the event of severe weather or natural disasters, Pearson 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 Pearson customer service at 888.790.4892 to determine if your test center is closed.

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

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.



Lockers

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

If 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), you will not be allowed to continue your examination. This will result in a failing result due to an incomplete examination. FSMTB reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited item.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Put all personal items in your locker before the exam begins, and do not access them during the exam unless the break or item has been approved.*



Prohibited Items

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

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

- Electronic devices, including cell phones, smartphones, watches, calculators, cameras, recording devices, Bluetooth devices, USB storage devices, computers, radios, transmitters, or receivers.

- Books, notes, paper, notebooks, outlines, dictionaries, study materials, writing instruments, erasers, pencil sharpeners, or other reference materials.
- Bags, backpacks, briefcases, luggage, purses, wallets, clutches, plastic bags, calendars, day planners, organizers, eyeglasses cases, cups, containers, umbrellas, or keys.
- Food, beverages, gum, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, snacks, or similar items unless approved as an accommodation or permitted as a comfort aid.
- Personal headphones, earphones, earplugs, sunglasses, hats, caps, visors, head coverings, coats, jackets, gloves, large jewelry, or good luck charms unless permitted by test center rules, approved as an accommodation, visually inspected, or worn for religious or medical reasons as allowed by policy.
- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives.
- Electronic, print, or live translators.



Comfort Aids

Pearson maintains a list of comfort aids that may be allowed in the testing room without a pre-approved testing accommodation. Comfort aids are subject to visual inspection by test center staff.

Review the current list here: [Pearson Comfort Aid List](#).

WHAT THIS MEANS: *A comfort aid is different from a testing accommodation. If you need an accommodation that changes standard testing conditions, request it during the MBLEx application process.*



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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Do not write anything on the note board until the exam has started.*



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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Answer every question. The exam must be completed within the exam time.



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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: Report problems while you are still at the test center, then email FSMTB within two business days.

Examination Results



Examination Results Reported as PASS or FAIL

Examination results are reported as PASS or FAIL. If you pass, a congratulatory message will be displayed on-screen upon exam completion. If you fail, you will receive a diagnostic report on your performance in each MBLEx content area. The indicators in the diagnostic summary are intended to assist future study efforts.

The state regulatory board or agency you indicated on your MBLEx application will receive your 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 MBLEEx results

Passing results support an application for licensure to practice massage/bodywork in a regulated jurisdiction. Passing the MBLEEx does not result in a certification or credential of any kind, nor does submitting your MBLEEx 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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Passing the MBLEEx is not the same as being licensed.*

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



Failing MBLEEx results

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



Result Transfers

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

1. Massage therapy regulatory boards/agencies (official result) OR
2. The MBLEEx candidate (unofficial result)

FSMTB sends official results only to the state board or licensing agency designated on your MBLEEx application or on an MBLEEx Result Transfer Form. You may request that FSMTB send an official result to a different state by submitting an MBLEEx Result Transfer Form.

Result Transfer Forms (RTFs) requesting that MBLEEx results be sent to recipients other than the above will not be processed, and no refunds will be granted. RTFs should be submitted online through the candidate's FSMTB Examination Account and will incur a \$40 fee. RTF application fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *FSMTB does not send official results to employers, schools, or other third parties. FSMTB will resend an exam result to the same jurisdiction at no additional cost for up to three months from the original send date. After three months, resending to the same jurisdiction will require another completed Result Transfer Form and the applicable fee.*

Please allow three to five business days for FSMTB to process an MBLEEx Result Transfer request.

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 ADA Supplement for details on how to reapply with accommodations.



How Many Times Can I Take the MBLEx?

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.



Get Licensed

After passing the MBLEx, before you can begin practice, you will need to apply for a license in the state in which you plan to work. 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.

Visit fsmtb.org for a list of state regulatory board websites and licensure requirements.

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 visit fsmtb.org 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

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 you have designated, it includes the identification and educational information 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 when they compare your MBLEx result file with your licensure application.

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:

1. Invalidate your MBLEx result.
2. Suspend your future access to the MBLEx or other FSMTB programs and services.
3. Impose other conditions for your access to the MBLEx.

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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *The information you give FSMTB should match the information you give to the state when you apply for your license.*

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.

WHAT THIS MEANS: *Fraud or rule violations can affect your application, your exam result, future access to FSMTB programs and services, and may result in additional fees.*



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. 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. FSMTB reserves the right to enforce consequences applicable when it discovers violations and infractions of such laws. FSMTB will provide candidates with due process in all such cases.

The FSMTB provides a [video explaining examination security](https://www.fsmtb.org/video-explaining-examination-security) at [fsmtb.org](https://www.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

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. 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 clearly 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.

Visit fsmtb.org 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

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.



FSMTB is a fully autonomous, nonprofit 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.

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

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MBLEx Support Center

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