



FSMTB®

# Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Candidate Handbook

**Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards**

*fsmtb.org • Effective July 2023*



# Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

Candidate Handbook | Effective July 2023

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## Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

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

MBLEx Support Center: 1.866.962.3926 | [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org)

FSMTB Executive Office: 913.681.0380 | [info@fsmtb.org](mailto:info@fsmtb.org)

[www.fsmtb.org](http://www.fsmtb.org)

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# Introduction

# Introduction

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## About this Handbook

**This handbook is the most important source of information for those applying to take the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx).** Here you will find information on eligibility requirements, application procedures, fees, scheduling, exam content, and results. This edition of the handbook replaces all prior policies or procedures addressed in it and all representations, verbal or written. It is important to note all applicable rules and circumstances cannot be cited in this handbook, so additional FSMTB policies, procedures, and instructions may also apply and may be modified, amended, or canceled by FSMTB at any time, with or without notice.

If you have any questions about an examination policy or procedure, please email [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org) or call 1.866.962.3926.

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## About the MBLEx

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

The first MBLEx was administered in July 2007 during the pilot testing phase of development. The examination was developed with the help of leading massage/bodywork professionals throughout the nation. During this development period, FSMTB followed national guidelines for testing to ensure a fair, valid, and reliable examination.

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## Contacting You

The FSMTB will communicate with you primarily through email. If you do not have an email address, FSMTB will communicate with you via U.S. mail, which may result in communication delays. Such delays will not extend exam application processing time or deadlines. It is your responsibility to keep your contact information up to date. Any updates to your contact information may be made in your FSMTB Examination Account.

If you need to change your name, date of birth, or Social Security number after your application has been submitted, please email [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org) with an explanation of the change and verification, such as a copy of your ID, marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other legal documents.

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## Privacy Policy

For security purposes, the caller will be asked for identifying information before any information is released over the phone. For example, you may be asked to provide your date of birth or address. This helps FSMTB protect your personal information. Examination results are never released over the phone.

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

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## Confidentiality Policy

**The FSMTB respects your privacy.** We do not disclose any documentation submitted and received in connection with examination applications and results, except upon written permission from the applicant or candidate, as requested by governmental licensing bodies or 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](#).*

# The MBLEx<sup>®</sup> Process

**1**

## **Application**

You will create an FSMTB Examination Account online and apply for the MBLEx.

**2**

## **Processing**

Your completed MBLEx application, including education verification, is processed within five business days.

**3**

## **Authorization to Test (ATT)**

FSMTB issues an ATT via email. You must test within the dates shown on the ATT.

**4**

## **Schedule MBLEx**

Schedule online with Pearson VUE, or call toll-free, and select the date, time, and test center location.

**5**

## **Confirmation**

Pearson VUE will email the exam appointment confirmation to you.

**6**

## **Take MBLEx**

You will receive an unofficial exam result at the test center. FSMTB will send your official exam result to the designated state within five business days.

**Apply**



# Application Process

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## Regulation of Massage Therapy in the United States

**Currently, 50 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 be sure 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](#).

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## MBLEx Eligibility

**Before you apply to take the MBLEx, ensure you meet the eligibility requirements listed on the next page.**

*Applicants seeking access to the MBLEx acknowledge they are taking the exam to meet regulatory requirements.*

If you are unable to meet the eligibility requirements or have further questions, please email [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org).

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## Fees

You must pay the MBLEx application fee when you submit your application. If you need to retake the MBLEx, you must reapply and pay the application fee in effect at that time. If you have passed the MBLEx, you cannot take it again unless approved by your state regulatory board or agency.

All fees must be paid in US (\$) funds by credit card, certified check, or money order, made payable to FSMTB; personal checks are not accepted.

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

The FSMTB accepts Visa or Mastercard for online payment for fees, products, or services. Any subsequent dispute(s) over the charges by you with the credit card authorizer or banking institution without reasonable cause may be considered nonpayment and grounds for imposition of additional service fees, cancellation of the product or service purchased, and/or restriction from use of the FSMTB website, programs, and services.

*MBLEx application fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.*

# MBLEx<sup>®</sup> Eligibility Chart

You must meet all the following requirements to take the MBLEx.

## 1 Application

Submit a complete MBLEx Application with the required fee.

## 2 Verification

Ensure your massage education program verifies your education directly with FSMTB.

## 3 Agreement

Acknowledge and agree that you will follow FSMTB examination policies.

## Massage 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 education program. Graduation from an approved massage therapy education program.*

**Education verification must be submitted to FSMTB directly from your massage school or education program.** An approved massage therapy education program is approved or recognized by the state board or agency authorized to regulate massage therapy in the state in which the school is located.

In the event, the massage therapy board/agency does not approve or recognize education programs, approval, or recognition from the relevant state department of education or like agency, in the state in which the school is located, shall apply. In the event of a conflict between the state board/agency and the Department of Education, the approval or recognition of the massage therapy board/agency shall prevail.

In the event, 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 like agency, in the state in which the school is located, the massage therapy education program must obtain approval from FSMTB.

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## 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, your school is notified via email that education verification is needed. However, you must ensure your school completes the verification process.

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

If you received your massage education by completing an apprenticeship, check with your state regulatory board or agency to verify it will consider your education acceptable for licensing **BEFORE** you apply to take the MBLEx.

You do not need to graduate from a massage therapy education program to apply for the MBLEx.

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## Apprenticeship

**MBLEx applicants who apprenticed are required to have their mentor submit education records, verifying that the applicant has met the FSMTB education requirements for taking the MBLEx.**

The MBLEx applicant who apprenticed must apply for licensure through their state licensing board or agency **BEFORE** being approved to take the MBLEx.

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

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## 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.** Please check with your [state's requirements](#), as some states require a specific agency to conduct the evaluation. Please note that FSMTB requires all evaluation documents to be in English.

*You must apply for licensure through your state regulatory board or agency **BEFORE** being approved to take the MBLEx if you received your massage education outside of the U.S.*

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# How to Obtain Your Education Records for Education Verification

## **If your education was received in the U.S.**

- Be sure that your school logs into its online Education Verification Center (EVC) account to verify your education after you have submitted your application.
- If your school does not have an EVC account, they can email your official transcript directly to [schoolsupport@fsmtb.org](mailto:schoolsupport@fsmtb.org).
- If your school uses a clearing house service to send out official education records, have the service send your official transcript to [schoolsupport@fsmtb.org](mailto:schoolsupport@fsmtb.org).

## **If you completed an apprenticeship in the U.S.**

- Check with the state licensing board or agency to verify that it will consider your apprenticeship acceptable for licensing BEFORE you apply to take the MBLEx.
- Once you have applied, ask your mentor to submit education records to [schoolsupport@fsmtb.org](mailto:schoolsupport@fsmtb.org).
- You must apply for licensure through the state licensing board or agency BEFORE your MBLEx application can be approved.
- The state licensing board or agency must inform FSMTB that your education meets their educational requirements and states that you must pass the MBLEx as part of their licensing requirements.

## **If you received your massage education outside of the United States**

- Check with the state licensing board or agency to verify that it will consider your non-US education acceptable for licensing BEFORE you apply to take the MBLEx.
- Once you have submitted your MBLEx application, submit an educational equivalency report in English directly to FSMTB via your Examination Account or email it to [schoolsupport@fsmtb.org](mailto:schoolsupport@fsmtb.org). Please check your state's equivalency report requirements, as some states use a specific agency to conduct the evaluation.
- You must apply for licensure through the state licensing board or agency BEFORE your MBLEx application can be approved.
- The state licensing board or agency must inform FSMTB that your education meets their educational requirements and states that you must pass the MBLEx as part of their licensing requirements.

## **If your school is closed**

- Contact the state department of higher education. The department may maintain the records for the closed school or could tell you who the custodian of records is and provide the necessary contact information.
- An internet search may also help. Type in the name of your school and the word "transcripts". This can often help you locate a website that has information on how to obtain your transcripts directly from the school's custodian of records.

*If you experience difficulties obtaining your education records, please contact [schoolsupport@fsmtb.org](mailto:schoolsupport@fsmtb.org).*

## Exam Language

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

Your state may have requirements regarding examination language. The language you choose to test will be included in the exam result report, which is sent to your state regulatory board after you complete your exam. Please review your state's requirements before selecting your exam language.

You may view your state's requirements by selecting your state from the [Regulated States](#) page at [fsmtb.org](https://fsmtb.org).

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## Testing Accommodations

### How to Request Testing Accommodations When Applying for the MBLEx

**The MBLEx Testing Accommodations Handbook is available [here](#).** Please review this handbook for more details about requesting testing accommodations.

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) complies with federal laws per the Americans with Disabilities Act. FSMTB will consider accommodations requests from qualified candidates with a diagnosed disability to take the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) if the requests 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.

#### How to request testing accommodations:

1. When completing your online MBLEx application, choose “yes” when asked if you need testing accommodations.
2. New dialogue boxes will open with questions you will need to respond to.
3. To support your request, you can upload documentation applicable to your diagnosis directly to your application. If you do not have that documentation available to upload, you can submit it separately to [ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org).
4. Candidates who have been granted testing accommodations will receive an approval letter via email.
5. You must sign and return both pages of the accommodations agreement letter to FSMTB through your FSMTB Examination Account or email them to [ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org).

The signed agreement will prompt the release of your Authorization to Test (ATT) allowing you to schedule your examination appointment. You must bring your approval letter to the test center and present it at check-in on the day of your exam.

Accommodations cannot be requested at the test center. All direct inquiries should be sent to [ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org). Please note, a request for testing accommodations may delay application processing time.

Submitting an accommodations request does not guarantee that testing accommodations will be made. FSMTB reviews each request and professional recommendations to determine if the accommodations are reasonable and appropriate to the testing environment. Accommodations that would fundamentally alter the nature of the examination will not be granted.

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

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## How to Apply for the MBLEx

**Applicants must apply for the MBLEx online by creating a personal FSMTB Examination Account. Printable applications may be requested by contacting [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org).**

*Returning candidates who tested before the implementation of the online Examination Center must register and create an FSMTB Examination Account.*

Please click [here](#) for steps on how to create your FSMTB Examination Account, apply for the MBLEx, and check the status of your MBLEx application.

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## Signature and Acknowledgement

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

1. You acknowledge and agree to 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 it is determined by FSMTB that any information provided regarding your application is not true, falsified, or inaccurate, your application may be denied, or your exam result may be invalidated.
3. You authorize FSMTB to obtain additional information about your qualifications and application for testing.
4. You acknowledge and agree that 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, or otherwise, about any possible cheating by yourself or others, can result not only in a denial to release examination results, invalidations of examination results, suspension from access to the MBLEx and other FSMTB programs and services but also in possible legal action against you, including criminal prosecution.
5. MBLEx fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

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## FSMTB Online Services

**By using FSMTB's website and online services, you agree to the following:**

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 in cases of technical complications caused by FSMTB.

The FSMTB accepts Visa or Mastercard for online payment for fees, products, or services. Any subsequent dispute(s) over the charges by you with the credit card authorizer or banking institution without reasonable cause may be considered nonpayment and grounds for imposition of additional service fees, cancellation of the product or service purchased, and/or restriction from use of the FSMTB website, programs, and services.

# Application Review

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## Application Approval

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

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

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## Insufficient Documentation Notification

**It is your responsibility to make 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 needed to complete your application.

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## 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, and notification to state licensing boards.

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

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### **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, USPS Express Mail, First-Class Mail, or Priority Mail with delivery signature confirmation; or a private overnight delivery service such as FedEx or UPS.



# Approved Applications

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## Authorization to Test

**Once your education has been verified, your completed MBLEx application will be processed within five business days.** Once FSMTB approves your application, you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter via email. It is your responsibility to make sure FSMTB has your current email address on file. Your ATT letter is important and authorizes you to schedule your exam date.

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. Please see the [Changing Your Exam Appointment](#) section of this handbook for more information. Contact information for Pearson VUE is listed on your ATT.

*You must test within the timeframe listed on your ATT.*

It is your responsibility to review your ATT for accuracy. The name listed on your ATT must 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 and before you schedule your examination appointment if you find an error on your ATT at [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org). Please note, FSMTB may require documentation to correct the information and reissue your ATT.

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## ATT Expiration

**Your ATT will expire if you do not test within the time frame listed on your ATT.** 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. 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.*

# Scheduling

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## 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](https://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. Please see the ATT section of this handbook for more information.

*FSMTB cannot schedule or change your exam appointment for you. You must contact Pearson VUE to schedule, reschedule, or cancel your exam appointment. You may do so by visiting the online scheduler at [pearsonvue.com/fsmtb](https://pearsonvue.com/fsmtb), or by calling 888.790.4892 (toll-free), Monday - Friday, 7 AM to 7 PM (U.S. Central Time).*

If you have any questions for FSMTB, you may reach our MBLEx Service Support Center at 866.962.3926 (toll-free) or [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org), Monday - Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM (U.S. Central Time).

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## Before You Schedule

1. Review the spelling of your name on the ATT. If it does not match the identification you take to the test center, contact FSMTB immediately at [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org) and provide the correct information.
2. Check for content accuracy. If you find an error on your ATT, FSMTB will require documentation of the correct information before your ATT is reissued.
3. Be prepared to take the exam. The ATT includes the beginning and end dates of the authorization period in which you are eligible to schedule and take your exam. Same-day appointments and walk-ins are not permitted.

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## How to Schedule

**To schedule your examination appointment, you may use the online scheduler at [pearsonvue.com/fsmtb](https://pearsonvue.com/fsmtb) or call the Customer Service Call Center at 888.790.4892 toll-free Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. U.S. Central Time.**

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## Appointment Confirmation Notice

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

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

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## Changing Your Exam Appointment

**Within your ATT eligibility window, you may change your test date and/or test center online or via the Customer Service Call Center.**

Beginning July 1, 2023, candidates who cancel or reschedule their exam appointment within 60 days of their existing appointment will be charged a fee of \$50.

To cancel or reschedule an exam appointment, candidates should use the online scheduler at [pearsonvue.com/fsmtb](https://pearsonvue.com/fsmtb) or call the Pearson VUE Customer Service Support Center toll-free, at 888-790-4892, Mon. - Fri., 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM Central Time.

**Appointment changes may be made up to 24 hours before your existing appointment.**

Changes to your exam appointment cannot be made by leaving a phone message; you must speak with a Pearson VUE scheduling representative. If you change your appointment online, be sure that you complete the process and receive an appointment confirmation.

**You will receive a confirmation email from Pearson VUE within 24 hours.**

**Take the  
MBLEx**

## MASSAGE & BODYWORK LICENSING EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

### ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY (11%)

#### A. System structure

- Cardiovascular
- Digestive
- Endocrine
- Integumentary
- Lymphatic & Immune
- Musculoskeletal
- Nervous
- Reproduction
- Respiratory
- Sensory
- Urinary

#### B. System function

- Cardiovascular
- Digestion
- Endocrine
- Integumentary
- Lymphatic & Immune
- Musculoskeletal
- Nervous
- Reproduction
- Respiratory
- Sensory
- Urinary

#### C. Tissue injury and repair

#### D. Concepts of energetic anatomy

### KINESIOLOGY (12%)

- A. Skeletal muscle components & characteristics
- B. Concepts of skeletal muscle contractions
- C. Proprioceptors
- D. Skeletal muscle locations, attachments (origins, insertions), & 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/cold applications
- F. Overview of massage/bodywork modalities

### CLIENT ASSESSMENT, REASSESSMENT & 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, 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 & Records
    - Client records
    - Business records
- H. Healthcare and business terminology

# Prepare for the MBLEx

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## FSMTB Study Resources

The FSMTB provides several study resources to facilitate exam preparation. [Click here](#) for more information on the MBLEx Study Guide and MBLEx Check: Online Readiness Assessment.

We also provide several informational videos to help MBLEx candidates prepare to take their exams. You can view those videos [here](#).

## Take the MBLEx

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### Confidentiality and Exam Security

The FSMTB requires you to maintain the confidentiality and security of the exam questions on the MBLEx. You can find more information on exam security in the [Helpful Resources](#) section at the back of this handbook.

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### What to Expect at the Test Center

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

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### 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, including print, electronic, or in-person translators. Test center staff cannot act as translators at any point during the check-in and testing process. In addition, 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, you will be turned away from the test center.

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## Report Time and Check-In

**You must sign in at the test center before the exam can begin.** A digital photograph and biometric security procedures such as palm vein recognition will be used as part of the check-in procedures.

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

*Please arrive at the test center AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE your appointment.*

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## Lateness on the Day of the Exam

**You must arrive by the report time on your appointment confirmation notice, or you will not be able to take your exam.** You will be considered absent if you arrive late.

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 that time.

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## Absences on the Day of the Exam

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

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## Weather

**In the event of severe weather or natural disasters, Pearson VUE will determine test center closures.** Your examination will not be rescheduled if the test center stays open. You may contact the Pearson VUE Customer Service Call Center at 888.790.4892 to determine if your test center is closed.

If your examination is canceled by Pearson VUE, they will email you to reschedule. Please follow the directions in the email. You will not be charged additional exam fees if your exam is canceled by Pearson VUE.

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

## Required Identification

*You must bring TWO forms of identification (ID) to the test center on your exam date. The primary form of identification must be government-issued, include your photograph and signature, and it must not be temporary or expired. For the secondary form of identification, your photograph is optional; however, it must include a signature, and it must not be expired. Military IDs that do not include a signature but contain a chip or bar code may be used as secondary IDs.*

The format and spelling of your name must match the format and spelling on your MBLEx application, the Authorization to Test (ATT), and the identification you present at the test center. **Temporary or renewed driver's licenses are not acceptable forms of ID.**

**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.

If the test center staff have questions about your ID, you may be asked for additional proof of identity. You will be refused access to the examination if you have not proven your identity.

Admission to the test center and access to the examination does not imply that your identification is authentic and does not preclude subsequent invalidation of your MBLEx results due to misrepresentation, impersonation, forgery, or fraud. **In other words, using a fake ID to enter the test center puts you at risk of exam invalidation.**

### PRIMARY ID MUST CONTAIN:

*Photo + signature + not expired*

- Government-issued U.S. State / Territory Driver's License \*
- Government-issued U.S. State / Territory ID \*
- Government-issued Passport or U.S. Certificate of Naturalization
- Military ID

### SECONDARY ID MUST CONTAIN:

*Signature (See exceptions) + not expired*

- U.S. Social Security Card
- Military ID containing a chip or bar code, but no signature
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) with bar code, but no signature
- Signed employee ID/work badge/school ID
- Signed bank-issued credit card, ATM, or debit card
- Any ID on the primary list
- Alien Registration Card (green card or permanent resident visa)

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

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



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## Lockers

**Lockers are provided at the test center to store a small number of personal belongings.** You must leave all personal items before taking your exam. The FSMTB is not responsible for any items that are lost or stolen at the test center. If you possess prohibited items or access lockers during the examination, whether inside or outside of the testing room, you will not be allowed to continue your examination and will receive a failing result due to an incomplete examination. The FSMTB reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited item.

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## Prohibited Items

**Items you can take into the test room include 2 pieces of ID and your locker key.** Anything else is prohibited.

Cell phone access is prohibited at any time while at the test center. Items that cannot be taken into the testing room include but are not limited to the list below.

- 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
- Computers of any kind
- Cup or container of any kind
- Digital scanning or imaging device, stick or pen
- Earplugs
- E-cigarettes or gum
- Electronic device of any kind
- Electronic, print, or live translators
- Eyeglasses case
- Food or snacks of any kind
- Good luck charms
- Gum
- Hat, cap, visor, or head covering
- Headphones or earphones
- Large jewelry of any kind
- Magazine
- Notebook
- Notes in any form
- Outline
- Pager or beeper
- 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
- Umbrella
- USB storage device
- Video recording device of any kind
- Wallet or clutch
- Watch of any kind
- Weapon of any kind, including pocketknife

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## 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. During this time frame, a maximum of five (5) minutes is allotted to the security and confidentiality agreement and five (5) minutes to a brief survey.

**Security Agreement:** 5 minutes

**MBLEx Survey:** 5 minutes

**Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx):** 110 minutes for 100 questions

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

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## Pre-Exam Modules

**You have limited time to complete the Security and Confidentiality Agreement and the Information Survey.**

Writing on the erasable note board during this time is not permitted. If you attempt to write on the erasable note board before the exam 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 must reapply for the exam and pay the fee.

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## Examination Breaks

**There are no scheduled breaks during the examination unless approved for specific testing accommodations during the MBLEx application process.**

Unscheduled breaks during the examination are taken on your own time. **The clock does not stop if you take a break during the examination.** Security protocols will be in effect as you exit and reenter the testing room; there is no time adjustment for security checks.

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## Exam Administration Conditions

**If you experience any issues while taking your exam it is your responsibility to notify a proctor during the exam and before you leave the test center.**

You must notify FSMTB in writing about your experience and unresolved concerns at the test center so we can take appropriate action. We will investigate and verify the incident.

*If you experience any issues while taking your exam, notify FSMTB within two days after your examination date. Send your written report to [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org).*

# Results

# Examination Results

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## Examination results are reported as PASS or FAIL.

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

*If you have a previous passing result on the MBLEx that does not meet state regulatory requirements, you may retest with state permission.*

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## Passing MBLEx results

**Passing results are used to 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 begin the licensing process. Before you can practice, you must apply for a license through your state regulatory board or agency and meet all your state's requirements.

You will receive an unofficial copy of your examination result at the test center after you take your exam.

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## Failing MBLEx results

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

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## Result Transfers

**If you are moving to a new state and will apply for a license to practice, or if you are going through the employment interview process, FSMTB can transfer your exam result.** However, we must have your written permission. Click [here](#) for information on submitting a Result Transfer form.

The FSMTB will resend an exam result to the same state at no additional cost for three months. After three months, all result transfer requests will require a Result Transfer form and fee.

# Retaking the MBLEx

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## Reapplying for the Exam

**If you failed the MBLEx or missed your exam appointment for any reason, you must reapply.**

- You must wait 30 days from your last exam date to test again. If approved, your authorization will not begin until 30 days have passed.
- To take the MBLEx again, you must submit a new application and pay the fee in effect at that time.
- You must notify FSMTB of any changes, such as name, address, or accommodation requests when submitting a new application.
- If your education has already been verified, no action is needed, unless requested by FSMTB to do so.
- If you previously tested with Testing Accommodations, please refer to the [Testing Accommodations Handbook](#) for details on how to reapply with accommodations.

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## 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 may impose a limit.**

Check to see if your state regulatory board or agency has a limit on the number of times you may attempt to pass the MBLEx.

If you have previously passed the MBLEx, be sure to research the state regulatory requirements before reapplying to take the exam. If directed by a state regulatory board or agency to retake the MBLEx, you are required to obtain written approval from the state regulatory board to retest. Please forward the written approval letter to FSMTB before submitting an application.

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## Candidate Care

**The FSMTB listens to feedback about the examination process.** We can discuss study strategies or exam preparation. If you would like more information, please email [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org).

**Get Licensed**

# Get Licensed

**You must apply with your state regulatory board or agency for licensing.** It is your responsibility to meet state licensure requirements. Click [here](#) for a list of state regulatory board websites.

*The license to legally practice is issued by state regulatory boards or agencies, not FSMTB.*

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 that you are licensed until you receive official notification of licensure from the state regulatory board or agency in the jurisdiction in which you wish to practice.

For future needs, licensed practitioners should return to fsmtb.org for access to continuing education options. Please click [here](#) for more information on CE Registry and REACH.

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## Reporting MBLEx Results to State Licensing Boards

**The FSMTB's role in the licensing process is to report your exam result to your state regulatory board or agency.**

For license-related deadlines, please check 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 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 there are any discrepancies in the information when comparing your MBLEx result file to 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 any of the information on your MBLEx application is determined to be inaccurate, misrepresented, or falsified, FSMTB reserves the right to invalidate your MBLEx result, suspend future access to the MBLEx or other FMSTB programs and services, or impose other conditions for accessing the MBLEx.

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

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

# Helpful Resources



# 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, in conversation or recalled from memory, about MBLEx questions.

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## 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 to offset any administrative or legal costs associated with the investigation and/or adjudication of the case.

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## MBLEx Result Invalidations

**Violation of any FSMTB examination policy or Pearson VUE test center rule may be grounds for a candidate's MBLEx result being invalidated by FSMTB.**

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), which may include but is not limited to, the invalidation of your MBLEx result and/or suspension of future access to the MBLEx or other FSMTB programs and services. FSMTB will notify all State Licensing Boards of all MBLEx result invalidations.

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## Exam Irregularities and Cheating

Your participation in any irregularity occurring before, during, or after the examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, or any other examination irregularity, including but not limited to the failure to report any information about any irregularity or any suspected irregularity, may be sufficient cause for FSMTB, at its sole discretion, to terminate your participation, invalidate the results of your examination, seek monetary compensation, or take other appropriate action.

The MBLEx is protected by U.S. copyright law. The FSMTB reserves the right to enforce consequences applicable when violations and infractions of such laws are discovered. 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](https://www.fsmtb.org). All candidates are advised to access the video before taking the examination.**

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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 transmission by any means (oral, written, electronic, or otherwise) MBLEx content in whole or in part, is forbidden.

Your participation in any irregularity occurring before, during, or after the examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, or any other examination irregularity, including but not limited to the failure to report any information about any irregularity or any suspected irregularity, may be sufficient cause for FSMTB, at its sole discretion, to terminate your participation, invalidate the results of your examination, seek monetary compensation or take other appropriate action.

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

# Examination Development

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## Scope of the Examination

**Examination questions are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of facts and use of judgment.** There are no trick or ambiguous questions.

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

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## Development of the Examination

**The MBLEx is developed in stages.** In the first stage, a job analysis is outlined by a panel of expert practitioners from many traditions and schools of thought in the field of massage/bodywork.

These outlines describe the functions of a practitioner and the knowledge needed to perform those functions. Since massage/bodywork is such a diverse field and is practiced in a variety of ways, FSMTB takes great care to involve groups of educators and practitioners who are broadly representative of the field as it is practiced in the United States.

The job analysis is then validated by surveying practitioners throughout the United States. Several thousand practitioners typically participate in each Job Task Analysis (JTA) Survey, which is conducted every five to seven years. The MBLEx Content Outline is created from the survey results.

The second, ongoing stage of development involves other representative groups of practitioners across the country who work with FSMTB to write questions based on the MBLEx Content Outline. These new questions are reviewed by a committee of subject matter experts and are edited to ensure that they are written and that there is only one correct answer to each question.

In developing the examination, every effort is made to respect and include the various forms of massage/bodywork practiced in the United States. Reviews of the field are undertaken periodically to ensure that the examination remains relevant to current practice standards.

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## Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)

**The MBLEx consists of 100 questions and is a fixed-length computer adaptive test (CAT).** Each question must be answered in the order presented and must be completed within the allotted time, or it will result in a failed exam. When you answer a question correctly, the next question has a slightly higher level of complexity. The complexity of the questions presented continues to increase until a question is answered incorrectly. Then a less complex question is presented. In this way, the exam is customized to your ability level.

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

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## Criterion-Referenced Scoring

**The passing standard for the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) is adopted by the FSMTB Board of Directors using a recommendation from subject matter experts 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/bodywork. The passing standard is determined by a criterion-referenced method, which is commonly used in licensing examinations. A criterion-referenced passing standard applies minimum standards for competent practice to all candidates.

The criterion-referenced standard setting begins with the establishment of a minimum acceptable level of competence for safe practice that candidates must possess to pass the examination. The standard setting is achieved by a group comprised of licensed practitioners who represent various aspects of the practice, geographic areas, and levels of expertise. To ensure that the description of the profession represents the job tasks of practitioners entering the profession, input from entry-level practitioners is always included.

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## 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 contracted by FSMTB 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 in a safe and effective manner.

## **Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards**

7300 College Boulevard, Suite 650  
Overland Park, KS 66210

## **MBLEx Support Center**

1.866.962.3926 | [mblex@fsmtb.org](mailto:mblex@fsmtb.org)

## **FSMTB Executive Office**

913.681.0380 | [info@fsmtb.org](mailto:info@fsmtb.org)

**[fsmtb.org](http://fsmtb.org)**