



Federation *of* State
Massage Therapy Boards

Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx)

Special
Accommodations
Handbook

October 2007

The FSMTB complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and will accommodate requests from qualified candidates with a diagnosed disability for accommodations to take the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) *if* the request is reasonable and properly documented and does not fundamentally alter the examination or jeopardize exam security. Submission of an accommodations request does not guarantee that testing accommodations will be made. The FSMTB will review your request and professional recommendations to determine whether the accommodation is reasonable and appropriate to the testing environment or whether it would fundamentally alter the nature of the examination.

To request accommodations, submit the *ADA Accommodations Request Form*. If you require accommodations in the application process itself, contact FSMTB for assistance.

Standard Testing Conditions

Candidates taking the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination have two and a half (2 ½) hours to complete a 125-item multiple-choice examination on computer.

Unscheduled restroom or food breaks are permitted during the examination but the clock does not stop.

Covered Disabilities

If you are requesting any deviation from standard testing conditions because you are disabled, your disability must be one that is covered by the ADA, that is, you must have a *documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities*.

A *physical impairment* is defined by the ADA as:

Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

A *mental impairment* is defined by the ADA as:

[a]ny mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Given the wide variety of possible disabilities, neither the law itself nor the regulations list all specific diseases or conditions that might constitute “physical or mental impairments.”

Temporary conditions like a broken leg, a physical condition that is not the result of a physiological disorder (e.g., pregnancy), personality traits, and economic or cultural disadvantages are not disabilities under the ADA. “Stress” and “depression” may or may not be considered impairments, depending on whether they result from a documented physiological or mental disorder. Nonspecific diagnoses such as “academic problems,” “learning style differences,” “slow reader,” or “test difficulty or test anxiety” do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

An impairment is a “disability” under the ADA only if it *substantially limits* one or more *major life activities*. An individual must be unable to perform, or be significantly limited in the ability to perform, an activity when compared to an average person in the general population. The determination as to whether an individual is substantially limited is based on the effect of an impairment on *that* individual's life activities. Some impairments, such as blindness or deafness, are by their nature substantially limiting, but many other impairments may be disabling for some individuals but not for others, depending on the impact on their activities. Major life activities are activities that an average person can perform with little or no difficulty, for example, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, working, sitting, standing, lifting, or reading.

If you have a temporary impairment or other condition that is not covered by the ADA (e.g., a fracture, pregnancy) and that requires only minor modifications to the standard testing environment (e.g., wheelchair or elevator access), submit a letter of support from the medical doctor or other qualified professional who is treating you describing the nature of the condition, dates of treatment, and the modifications requested. Send this letter along with your application for the MBLEx and the appropriate fee. *If you need any other accommodations, then you must follow each of the steps outlined below.*

Candidate Request for ADA Accommodations Form

Disabled candidates must request special testing accommodations by completing the *ADA Accommodations Request Form* and providing supplemental information if requested. The candidate must initiate the request for accommodations: Requests for accommodations from third parties are not accepted (e.g., from massage schools).

Professional Documentation of ADA Accommodations

In addition, disabled candidates must arrange for a professional to provide supporting documentation. At a minimum, the professional must have demonstrated expertise and recognized credentials (e.g., licensure, certification, or specialized training) in the area of the disability *and* must be familiar with the *current impact* of that particular disability on your ability to perform on the MBLEx

or other similar timed, standardized test. Accommodation recommendations made by professionals are considered by FSMTB but are not guaranteed.

Accommodation History

A history of accommodations during formal education does not necessarily guarantee that FSMTB will provide those same accommodations to you during the MBLEx.

Information and Documentation Requirements for All Accommodations Requests

At a minimum, the information and documentation submitted by the candidate and the professional must:

- state the diagnosed disability;
- describe the specific accommodation(s) requested;
- explain the functional limitations resulting from the disability and any treatments or measures taken to mitigate its impact;
- describe the tests or methods used to diagnose the disability and any relevant educational or medical histories, including dates and test results (does not apply to permanent or unchanging physical or sensory disabilities);
- be current (the professional must have seen you within the last three years; this requirement does not apply to permanent or unchanging physical or sensory disabilities);
- appear on official letterhead and be signed by the evaluator or professional qualified to make the diagnosis (including information about licensure, certification, credentials, and area of specialization).

FSMTB reserves the right to request additional information at any time from candidates requesting ADA accommodations and/or from authorized third parties.

Additional Documentation Requirements for Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

If you have a specific learning or cognitive disability (e.g., attention deficit disorder, processing deficiency, or a physical or psychological disorder that affects cognitive function), you must also submit a comprehensive psychoeducational and/or neuropsychological assessment conducted within the previous three years that confirms the diagnosis. The assessment must be conducted by an evaluator with comprehensive training and direct experience with adults and submitted on the evaluator's letterhead. The diagnostic report, which can be an existing report or one specifically prepared to support your request for accommodations from FSMTB, must provide objective evidence of a substantial limitation in cognition or learning. At a minimum, it must include the following elements:

- A description and evaluation of the presenting problem including DSM-IV symptoms;

- Relevant educational or medical histories;
- A description of the assessment and evaluative instruments used to establish that a cognitive disability exists and rule out alternative conditions, including but not limited to actual test scores on aptitude, achievement, information processing, and other measures that are reliable, valid, and standardized for use with adults;
- A specific differential diagnosis that is supported by the test data, history, and/or clinical observations; that shows that the candidate's functional limitations are due to the diagnosed disability; and that rules out alternative conditions; and
- Specific recommendations for accommodations, including an explanation of why each recommended accommodation is necessary, with references to test results or clinical observations.

Confidentiality and Information Releases

All information related to your request for accommodations will remain confidential unless you authorize its release. In some circumstances, FSMTB may contact the professional directly to clarify information submitted or the recommendations made for your testing needs. Your signature on the *ADA Accommodations Request Form* acknowledges this possibility and authorizes FSMTB to contact such persons for any additional information related to your ability to sit for the examinations.

Retaking an Exam: Requests for Identical Accommodations

If you are retaking the MBLEx *and* your previous request for testing accommodations was approved within the last year *and* you still require the same accommodations, then you do not need to resubmit the *ADA Accommodations Request Form*. Simply indicate your request for accommodations on the *MBLEx Retake Form*.

Retaking an Exam: Requests for Additional or Different Accommodations or Initial Request Approved More Than One Year Ago

If you are retaking the MBLEx and are requesting additional or different accommodations *or* if your last request for accommodations was approved more than one year ago, you must complete and submit the *ADA Accommodations Request Form* along with your *MBLEx Retake Form*. Supporting documentation from the professional evaluator(s) does not have to be resubmitted if it is dated within the past three years.

Insufficient Documentation or Denial

It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain and submit all required information to process the request for accommodations. Requests for accommodations that are not supported by appropriate documentation may be denied, **BUT** your MBLEx application will be processed and reviewed as if you did not request any accommodations. If your application to take the MBLEx is approved, you may register for the standard administration of the MBLEx.

Approved Requests

If your request is approved, then FSMTB will notify you and confirm the accommodations. The FSMTB will make arrangements to provide the approved accommodation(s) with its testing services vendor. You will receive a *Notice to Schedule* that will provide you with a telephone number that you must use to schedule your test date and time.

Only accommodations approved in advance by FSMTB will be honored at the test site. No accommodation requests will be considered or approved at the test center.

Types of Accommodations

The following are examples of accommodations that may be provided:

- Extended testing time (untimed tests are not offered)
- Scribe to record answers
- Test reader
- Larger font test screen

Candidates are not permitted to provide their own readers, writers/recorders, or interpreters.

Applicability of FSMTB Policies

All FSMTB policies and procedures apply to test takers with disabilities in the same manner as standard test takers, including but not limited to the policies regarding eligibility for testing, testing, score cancellations and disqualification for cheating.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal a decision involving an accommodation request by providing additional documentation regarding your disability, you must contact FSMTB in writing within 10 days after you receive notice of the accommodations decision.