



Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination

MBLEx Testing Accommodations Handbook

Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

fsmtb.org

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TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). FSMTB 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. FSMTB reviews each 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.

Applicants must request accommodations at the same time as they apply to take the MBLEx. The ADA Accommodations Request Form is available on the FSMTB website: www.fsmtb.org.

STANDARD TESTING CONDITIONS

Candidates taking the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) have two (2) hours to complete a 100-item, four (4)-option, multiple-choice examination on a computer. Of this time, a maximum of five (5) minutes is allotted to the security and confidentiality agreement, and five (5) minutes to a brief survey. Unscheduled restroom or food breaks are permitted during the examination but the clock does not stop. Candidates are advised to plan their exam time carefully.

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 *documentable* 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:

Any 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 of the 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 (for example: pregnancy), personality traits, or 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. English as a second language (ESL) does not constitute a 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. A variety of other impairments might be disabling for some individuals, though not for others, depending on the impact on their *major life 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 (for example: a fracture or pregnancy) and the impairment requires only minor modifications to the standard testing environment (for example: wheelchair or elevator access), please submit a letter of support from your physician or qualified health professional who is administering your care. This letter should detail the nature of the impairment or condition, the dates of treatment, and the modifications to the testing environment that are being requested. Send the letter to the MBLEEx office along with your MBLEEx application and the application fee.

There are no additional fees assessed to exam candidates who are requesting special testing accommodations.

If you need any other accommodations, then you must follow each of the steps outlined below.

CANDIDATE REQUEST FOR ADA ACCOMMODATIONS FORM

Disabled candidates wishing special testing accommodations must complete the *ADA Accommodations Request Form* and provide supplemental information if requested.

The *candidate must* initiate the request for accommodations. Requests for accommodations from third parties are *not* accepted (for example: from massage schools, instructors, or relatives).

PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Disabled candidates must arrange for a qualified, appropriate professional to provide supplemental 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 the candidate's ability to perform on the MBLEEx or other similar timed,

standardized tests. Accommodation recommendations made by professionals are taken into consideration by FSMTB, but again, accommodations are not guaranteed.

ACCOMMODATION HISTORY

If you have previously been granted accommodations in an academic setting or similar testing situation, you may submit evidence of such prior accommodations to FSMTB. A history of accommodations during formal education does not necessarily guarantee that FSMTB will provide similar accommodations to you during the MBLEx.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement is a written document in which you briefly describe the disability that limits one or more of your major life activities (for example: walking, hearing, speaking, seeing, reading or writing). Submit this document with your ADA request form.

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

For all accommodations requests, the information and documentation submitted by the candidate and the qualified 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 (this does not apply to permanent or unchanging physical or sensory disabilities);
Note: Psychoeducational testing for learning disabilities must have been within 7 years. Evaluations for Mental Health conditions (Bipolar, ADHA, Depression, etc.) should be within the last year.
- 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. In the event the supplied documentation is insufficient, candidates will be notified in writing and given 60 days to provide additional information.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LEARNING OR COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

If you have a specific learning or cognitive disability (for example: 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.

This assessment must be conducted by an evaluator with comprehensive training and direct experience with adults and the report be 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-5 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;
- 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, the FSMTB may contact the health or evaluating 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 any such persons for any additional information related to your ability to sit for the examination.

RETAKE AN EXAM: REQUESTS FOR IDENTICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are retaking the MBLEx, 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 application.

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 new MBLEx application. Supporting documentation from the professional evaluator(s) does not have to be resubmitted unless it has been 3 or more years since your last attempt to take the MBLEx.

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, if so, 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. If the supporting documentation submitted with your ADA request is decided to be insufficient, and you do not respond or submit additional documentation to FSMTB within 60 days, your ADA request will be closed, and your application to take the MBLEx may be approved without accommodations.

APPROVED REQUESTS

If your request is approved, then FSMTB will email you an ADA Approval letter for your confirmation and acceptance of the approved accommodations which you will sign, scan, and email back to FSMTB. You may also print, sign, and mail the agreement back to FSMTB.

FSMTB will make arrangements to provide the approved accommodation(s) with its testing services vendor. You will receive an *Authorization to Test (ATT)* that will provide you with a telephone number that you *must* use to schedule your test date and time.

Note: 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 or on the day of testing.**

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
- Separate room

Candidates are not permitted to provide their own readers, writers/recorders, or to bring interpreters. Only ADA accommodations are approved by FSMTB.

APPLICABILITY OF FSMTB POLICIES

All FSMTB policies and procedures as outlined in the MBLEx Candidate Handbook 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, score cancellations, and disqualification for cheating.

MBLEx applications must be completed within six months. Do not submit your MBLEx application if you know that you will need more than six months to secure and submit your ADA supporting documentation.

Testing accommodations are only approved in connection with the ADA. FSMTB does not grant language accommodations for English as a Second Language (ESL). Note that foreign language interpreters, translators, any electronic devices for language translation and/or dictionaries are prohibited items and will be confiscated if they are carried into the testing area.

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.

Should you experience any environmental difficulties during the administration of the examination (too hot, too cold, too noisy, testing accommodations issues, etc.), *you are obligated* to notify the test center proctor about your concern *at the time* you are experiencing the concern.

Concerns that are not resolved at the test site should be submitted in writing to FSMTB. If you have any concerns that need to be reported to FSMTB, they must be submitted to FSMTB within 10 days of your examination date.

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For questions about ADA testing accommodations contact FSMTB at:

Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) Office

150 4th Avenue North, Suite 800, Nashville, TN 37219

Phone: 866.962.3926

Email: ada@fsmtb.org

Website: fsmtb.org



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