



**MBLEx**

MASSAGE & BODYWORK  
LICENSING EXAMINATION

ADA Testing  
Accommodations  
Handbook



**FSMTB**

FEDERATION OF STATE  
MASSAGE THERAPY BOARDS

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



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## Introduction

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) complies with federal laws in accordance with 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 and properly documented, do not fundamentally alter the examination, or jeopardize exam security.

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.

Applicants must request accommodations when filling out the MBLEx application by answering the need for testing accommodations with a *yes* or *no*. If yes, additional dialogue boxes will open for you to complete.

## General Testing Conditions

Candidates taking the MBLEx schedule a two (2) hour appointment.

Of this time, 110 minutes is allotted to complete a 100-item, four (4)-option, multiple-choice examination on a computer; a maximum of five (5) minutes is allotted to the security and confidentiality agreement; and an additional five (5) minutes is allotted to a brief survey. Unscheduled restroom or food breaks are permitted during the examination; however, the clock does not stop.

Please note that general testing conditions allow all candidates to enlarge the font size (up to 24-pt.) and change the color of the font and/or background to increase legibility and contrast. **ADA testing accommodations are not needed to access these modifications.**

## Available Accommodations

Applicants may request ADA testing accommodations to support their examination experience. Accommodations that may be provided include:

- Extended testing time (multi-day and untimed tests are *not* offered)
- Reader/recorder
- Increased font size beyond 24-pt.
- Separate room

Please note that some ADA testing accommodations require additional support and resources. Due to this, some accommodations may take more time to arrange.

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

## Who Should Apply for ADA Testing Accommodations?

**You should apply for ADA testing accommodations if** you are an individual with a diagnosed disability (physical or mental impairment) that substantially limits a major life activity. Please note that you will need to provide supplemental information.

**The *applicant* must initiate the request for accommodations.**

Requests for accommodations from third parties (e.g., massage schools, instructors, or relatives) are *not* accepted.

## Who Should Not Apply for ADA Testing Accommodations?

### Temporary Conditions

You do not need to request accommodations if you have a temporary condition or other condition that is not covered by the ADA (e.g., a fracture or pregnancy) and the condition requires only minor modifications to the general testing environment (e.g., a wheelchair or elevator access).

Instead, 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, treatment dates, and the modifications to the testing environment that are being requested.

Please have the letter sent to [ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org) at the same time that you submit your MBLEx Application, pay the exam fee, and have your massage program verify your education directly with FSMTB.

FSMTB will communicate your temporary conditions request to the test administration vendor. In some instances, you will need to provide the supportive equipment, such as a stool to elevate a limb or a comfort pillow. Such arrangements will be documented and communicated to you through email, followed by your Authorization to Test, which allows you to schedule your appointment.

**Modifications to the testing environment will not be considered or approved at the test center or on the day of testing.**

## Retaking the Examination

If you are retaking the MBLEx, you may or may not need to reapply for testing accommodations, depending on your circumstances.

Please note that supporting documentation from the professional evaluator(s) **does not** have to be resubmitted IF:

- your previous request for testing accommodations was approved within the last year; and
- you are requesting the same accommodations.

In these instances, you will simply indicate your request for accommodations on your new MBLEx application.

Please note that you **will** have to submit new supporting documentation with your new MBLEx application IF:

- you are requesting additional or different accommodations; or
- your previously submitted documentation does not meet the acceptable age of documentation as detailed on page seven (7).

## Covered Disabilities

If you are requesting *any* deviation from general 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**.

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.

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.

Stress or 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,” “test difficulty,” or “test anxiety” do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. **English as a second language does not constitute a disability.**

An impairment is classified as a disability under the ADA only if it substantially limits one or more major life activities. Some disabilities, such as blindness or deafness, are 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. 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 must be documented by a licensed professional and is based on the effect of the impairment on that individual's life activities.

**There are no additional fees assessed to exam candidates who request testing accommodations.**

## **Criteria for Information and Documentation**

For all accommodations requests, the information and documentation submitted by the applicant and the licensed professional must:

- State the diagnosed disability
- Describe the specific accommodation(s) requested
- Fully explain the current functional limitations resulting from the disability on the applicant's daily life
- Explain any treatments or measures taken to mitigate its impact
- 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)

### **Evaluation requirements**

Documentation must 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).

Please note that there are time-related requirements for all evaluation documentation to be considered current and documentation must include current levels of functioning.

<b>Diagnosis</b>	<b>Acceptable Age of Documentation</b>
Mental health conditions (bipolar disorder, depression, PTSD, GAD, etc.)	One (1) year or less
Attention deficit disorders (ADD / ADHD)	Three (3) years or less
Learning disabilities (cognitive, auditory, or visual processing disorders)	Five (5) years or less
Permanent disorders (physical or sensory related – visual impairment, hearing loss)	Record of permanent disability required

FSMTB reserves the right to request additional information at any time from applicants requesting MBLEx testing accommodations. In the event the supplied documentation is insufficient, applicants will be notified in writing. If requested documentation for an incomplete application is not received after six (6) months' time, the application expires without further notice to the applicant, and reapplication is required, inclusive of all examination fees in effect at that time.

## Required Documentation

### Professional Documentation

Applicants 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 disability on the applicant's ability to perform on the MBLEx or other similar timed, standardized tests. Recommendations made by professionals are taken into consideration by FSMTB; however, **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 the prior accommodations to FSMTB. A history of accommodations during formal education does not guarantee that FSMTB will provide similar accommodations to you during the MBLEx.

### 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 five (5) years that confirms all diagnoses.

This assessment must be conducted by an evaluator with comprehensive training and direct experience with adults, and the report must be submitted on the evaluator's letterhead. The diagnostic report, which can be an existing report, or one specifically prepared to support your accommodations request, 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
- 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 applicant'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.

## Accommodations Approval

If your request is approved, FSMTB will email you an ADA Approval Letter for you to confirm and accept the approved testing accommodations. Please sign the letter and email all pages back to FSMTB ([ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org)).

In certain cases, the testing vendor will need to arrange for specific equipment to be in place for the examination appointment. There may be a slight delay in approving such accommodations though FSMTB and the testing vendor will make every effort to minimize delays.

FSMTB will make arrangements to provide the approved ADA testing accommodation(s) with the testing services vendor. You will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) that will provide you with a telephone number and website address. You can use either option to schedule your test date and time.

**Only ADA testing accommodations approved in advance by FSMTB will be honored at the test center. Accommodation requests will not be considered or approved at the test center or on the day of testing.**

## Confidentiality and Information Releases

All information related to your ADA testing accommodations will remain confidential and be used solely for the purpose of determining eligibility for reasonable ADA testing

accommodations in the administration of the MBLEx. In some circumstances, FSMTB may contact the health or evaluating professional directly to clarify information submitted or the recommendations made for your testing needs.

The submission of your testing accommodations request on your completed MBLEx application form acknowledges this possibility and authorizes FSMTB to contact any such persons, as well as authorizes the evaluating professionals to communicate with FSMTB about any additional information related to your eligibility for ADA testing accommodations.

**As an MBLEx applicant requesting ADA accommodations, you authorize FSMTB to contact the health or evaluating professional(s) who have/has treated you, as well as authorize the professional(s) to communicate with FSMTB about any information relevant to your eligibility for ADA testing accommodations.**

## **Applicability of FSMTB Policies**

All FSMTB policies and procedures outlined in the [MBLEx Candidate Handbook](#) apply to test takers using testing accommodations in the same manner as standard test takers, including, but not limited, to the policies regarding eligibility for testing, exam result invalidations, and disqualification or suspension from the MBLEx and FSMTB services for cheating and misconduct.

**MBLEx Applications must be completed within six (6) months.**

Do not submit your MBLEx Application if you know that you will need more than six (6) months to secure and submit your ADA supporting documentation.

If your application expires, you will be required to apply as a new applicant, subject to all examination policies and fees in effect at that time.

FSMTB does not grant language accommodations for English as a second language. Please 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 brought into the testing center.

**We look forward to assisting you with meeting your professional goals.**



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Please direct questions to:

FSMTB Testing Accommodations Team

[ada@fsmtb.org](mailto:ada@fsmtb.org)

866.962.3926

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