

Board Certification for Therapeutic
Massage & Bodywork

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK



NCBTMB Mission: To define and advance the highest standards
in the massage therapy and bodywork profession.

VERSION 18

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1 BOARD CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB) is a nationally-accredited credentialing organization, formed to set higher standards for those who practice therapeutic massage and bodywork. It does this through a nationally recognized certification program that evaluates and attests to the core skills, abilities, knowledge and attributes expected of entry-level practitioners of therapeutic massage and bodywork.

NCBTMB offers one examination for certification—the Board Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (BCETMB). NCBTMB has included a content outline for the BCETMB within this handbook. The eligibility criteria for Board Certification can be found on pages 3-4 of this handbook. Please review these criteria carefully before submitting your application to test.

Once you have become Board Certified, you will join thousands of other massage and bodywork professionals who are committed to fostering higher standards of ethical and professional practice in the delivery of therapeutic massage and bodywork services.

NCBTMB contracts with Prometric, an independent testing company, to administer the Board Certification Examination. Experts at Prometric work closely with NCBTMB to develop the exam that is used to evaluate the knowledge of therapeutic massage and bodywork professionals.

Prometric also scores the exam and sends the results to NCBTMB. NCBTMB oversees Prometric's activities to assure that all components of the examination process meet national standards.

2 GENERAL EXAM INFORMATION

The Board Certification exam is a Certification Examination that candidates can take and pass to show they have earned a higher voluntary credential within the profession.

Exam Facts

- The Board Certification exam consists of 140 multiple-choice questions.
- Four (4) choices are provided for each multiple-choice question. Only one (1) choice is the correct answer.
- You will have 140 minutes (2.3 hours) to complete the certification exam.
- A computer scores the exam as either pass or fail.
- You will receive notification of having either passed or failed the exam as soon as you have completed it.
- NCBTMB's Online Practice Exam (a study tool) is available at shop.ncbtmb.org to prepare you for the Board Certification Exam.

3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

You may sit for NCBTMB's certification exam once you have graduated from your massage therapy program and meet the remaining Board Certification requirements.

Board Certification:

There are two (2) pathways you may be eligible to take the exam.

Pathway 1: Graduate from a NCBTMB Assigned School and meet the remaining minimal requirements.

Pathway 2: Complete the Portfolio Review Process. This process was created for applicants who have not completed a program of formal instruction, graduated from an international program, or did not graduate from a NCBTMB Assigned School.

Board Certification Criteria

To be considered eligible to receive the BCTMB credential, a candidate must:

- Graduate from a NCBTMB Assigned School*
- Pass a criminal background check (performed by NCBTMB)
- Pass the NCBTMB Board Certification Exam
- Maintain a current massage therapy license
- Agree to uphold NCBTMB's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics

**Candidates who did not graduate from a NCBTMB Assigned School or completed international training may instead apply via Portfolio Review*

Additionally, candidates must have received massage therapy education and meet the minimal criteria. Specifically, the program of study must have included:

- 300 hours or 60% delivered In-Class (face-to-face); must be science-based information
- 200 hours or 40% of hands-on instruction delivered in-class (face-to-face) only

The program of instruction must include:

- 200 hours of Western-based massage and bodywork assessment, theory, and application instruction
- 125 hours of instruction on the body systems (anatomy, physiology and kinesiology)
- 40 hours of Pathology
- 10 hours of business and ethics instruction (a minimum of 6 hours in ethics)
- 125 hours of instruction in an area or related field that theoretically completes your massage program of study

Formal training must be received from a state-licensed/approved/exempt training/education institution. Please ask your school administrator for the required "NCBTMB Assigned School Code." Include your School Code on your application form. Failure to include your school code will delay your application.

You must be able to prove that you have graduated from a formal training program. This proof must be in the form of an original official school transcript.

Official school transcripts must be sent to NCBTMB directly from the institution at which you received your training. Be sure to include all other documentation with your online application.

All education and training courses must have been completed satisfactorily or have a passing grade. If your school did not offer an "Ethics" course, your school will need to explain where in the transcript you received the six clock hours of instruction in ethics. For example, the school might be able to explain that, "six clock hours of ethics were taught in the course called Professional Business Practices."

You must have graduated from the program and completed the additional requirements before you will be awarded the Board Certification credential. For example, if you are enrolled in an 800-hour program, you must complete ALL 800 hours.

You must be at least 18 years old at the time you sit for the Board Certification examination.

Portfolio Review Process

You can apply through the Portfolio Review Process if your program of study was taken in a country other than the United States, does not meet the requirements that are listed on the previous page, and/or if you have taken courses from other schools or colleges. It is important to note that all students who attend a school outside of the United States MUST apply through the Portfolio Review process.

The Portfolio Review Process allows you to put a portfolio together of all of your training. The Portfolio Review team reviews your portfolio to see whether the training that you have is equivalent to the training you would get in a formal program. An additional \$75 fee is required. Transcripts proving your education are required along with your application.

4 APPLYING FOR THE EXAM

To apply for the NCBTMB Board Certification exam, you must first create a user profile on www.ncbtmb.org and complete the correct application.

To create an account, visit www.ncbtmb.org and click “Register” at the top of the page. Complete all required information and submit.

Once logged in, click “Initial Applications” from the left-hand navigation menu. Select the application entitled “Board Certification Initial Application.”

Your application must be completed in full to be reviewed. Additionally, you must complete your application within ninety (90) days of starting it. If you fail to complete and submit your application during this time, you will be required to start the application over.

Any documentation that you are having difficulties uploading may be mailed to the address below. Please ensure that your name is on the documentation so NCBTMB employees know which account to upload the documentation into.

NCBTMB
1333 Burr Ridge Parkway, Suite 200
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

If you are applying via Portfolio Review, please follow the above instructions to first create an account on the NCBTMB website.

Next, click “Applications” from the left-hand navigation menu and select “Portfolio Review Application” from the list of options. Complete all required information prior to submitting.

Generally, Board Certification applications are processed within two to four weeks. Additionally, the candidate’s criminal background check must be returned to NCBTMB before the candidate may apply for the test.

Please allow four to six weeks to complete a Portfolio Review application.

Once NCBTMB has processed your application, you will receive an email confirming the application and next steps to scheduling your exam.

Please keep in mind it is your (the applicant’s) responsibility to submit all necessary documentation. **Furthermore, all criteria must be met and submitted before the credential can be awarded.**

5 FEES

Fees must be paid by credit or debit card on www.ncbtmb.org upon submission of your desired application. Please contact us at info@ncbtmb.org or by calling 1-800-296-0664 if you prefer to pay by check, as special arrangements will need to be made.

Please note each of the fees entitles you to one (1) examination registration, one (1) copy of your results, and, when you pass the Board Certification Exam and meet the criteria, one (1) copy of your certificate.

Board Certification Examination Fee: \$250

Portfolio Review Fee: \$325

Non-Refundable Background Check Fee: \$25

Processing Fees: There is a **\$75** processing fee plus **\$25** non-refundable background check fee if you cancel your application before the exam date or are deemed ineligible to take the exam.

There is a **\$150 fee** if you have applied through Portfolio Review and cancel your application before the exam date or are deemed ineligible to take the exam.

Non-Sufficient Funds Fee: \$30

If your credit card is declined for any reason, a **\$30** charge will be added.

NOTE: Fees are always subject to change.

6 NCBTMB'S REVIEW OF APPLICATION

NCBTMB performs a criminal background check on all candidates. Each candidate must pass the criminal background check before being made eligible to test.

Candidates have **ninety (90) days** from the time they are deemed eligible to take the exam to schedule and sit for their examination.

When approved, you will receive an automated "Authorization to Test" email stating your eligibility period. This ninety (90) day period starts as soon as you are made eligible.

It is your (the applicant's) responsibility to schedule your exam directly with NCBTMB's testing agency, Prometric, at 1-800-856-4139 or www.prometric.com. Information will be provided to you via email and within your NCBTMB online account to do this.

After scheduling your exam with Prometric, you will receive an email confirming your date, time, and location to the desired testing center.

Candidates who do not take the exam during this time period will forfeit their exam fee in full. You will also have to reapply and pay the full exam fee in order to again be considered eligible to take the exam.

All information submitted by an applicant/candidate may be provided to law enforcement agencies and state, county and local regulatory agencies at the discretion of NCBTMB and/or the request of such agencies.

7 MEETING THE CRITERIA

All candidates must submit transcripts stating that you have completed a massage therapy program from an NCBTMB Approved School, as well as a copy of a valid government ID, within the Board Certification application. Additionally, you must provide proof of legal practice within your state (e.g. a massage therapy license) therapy license).

If you do not pass the criminal background check, a \$75 processing fee along with the \$25 background check fee will be charged and the remainder will be refunded.

8 RESCHEDULING YOUR EXAM

Rescheduling an Exam You Have Yet to Take

To reschedule an exam by phone, you must notify Prometric at 1-800-856-4139 or www.prometric.com within one (1) month prior to your scheduled exam.

Your rescheduled examination date must still fall within your original ninety (90) day eligibility period. The full exam fee from your first reservation will be applied to your new exam date. If you do not reschedule within these guidelines, you will forfeit your entire exam fee. If you wish to reapply at a later date, you will be required to submit all applicable fees.

DO **NOT** call NCBTMB to reschedule your appointment with Prometric.

Rescheduling a Missed Exam Appointment

If you missed your scheduled exam appointment, you will need to complete an "Application for Retest" and submit an additional fee. Once this is processed, you will be reset for a new ninety (90) day eligibility period.

9 CANCELING YOUR EXAM AND ELIGIBILITY

Canceling your Exam Eligibility if you have Already Scheduled an Exam

If you have already registered for an exam, call Prometric at 1-800-856-4139 within one (1) month of your scheduled exam.

DO **NOT** call NCBTMB to cancel your appointment with Prometric.

Canceling your exam eligibility if you have NOT scheduled an Exam

Call NCBTMB at **1-800-296-0664**. Your eligibility to take the exam will be invalidated. You will have to complete a new application, submit required documentation and pay all applicable fees if you decide to take the exam in the future. After answering a few questions, your eligibility to receive a refund will be determined.

Canceled Exam Fee Refund

To be considered for a partial refund, you must contact NCBTMB by phone at 1-800-296-0664 or by email at info@ncbtmb.org prior to your eligibility expiration date. Please note that NCBTMB will NOT return any documentation submitted.

Once materials are submitted, they become the property of NCBTMB. A refund of your application fee, minus a \$75 processing fee along with a \$25 background check fee, will be sent within six weeks of the written request. Once NCBTMB receives your letter requesting a refund, you will no longer be eligible to take the exam.

If your request to cancel your application is not received by your eligibility expiration date, and you do not sit for the examination, you forfeit your entire application and all examination fees. If you decide to take the examination at a later date, you will need to reapply as a new candidate. You will have to resubmit your application and payment and abide by all current policies, requirements, and applicable fees.

10 MISSING YOUR EXAM

Missing a scheduled exam

If on the day you are scheduled to take the exam you do not appear, and you have not

rescheduled or canceled your exam as outlined above, you will forfeit the full exam fee.

There are five acceptable reasons for missing a scheduled exam:

- Serious illness—either you or an immediate family member (must be documented)
- Death in the immediate family
- Traffic accident in route to the exam site
- Unexpected military duty call-up
- Natural disaster (hurricane, earthquake, flood, etc.) (Note: Not allowable are isolated events including power outages, high winds, icy roads, etc.)

If your reason is accepted, you will be allowed to reschedule your exam, free of charge, one time only. You will need to call NCBTMB at 1-800-296-0664 and state your reason for missing the exam. This must be done no later than **four (4) business days** after the missed exam date. NCBTMB reserves the right to request additional evidence to support your reason for missing the exam.

11 ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

NCBTMB and Prometric pledge to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (42 USC Section 12101, et. seq.), and with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.), to the best of their ability. If you need special accommodations because of a disabling condition, you may ask for special testing services. This request must be submitted using the “ADA Accommodations” form found under the “Request Forms” link within your NCBTMB profile. All requests are handled on an individual basis.

If you are requesting special accommodations, you must submit a letter from an appropriate Health care professional that is licensed to evaluate the disability. The letter must be written on the healthcare professional’s

letterhead and include the professional's title, address, telephone number and date.

The letter must also include a diagnosis of the disabling condition and explain why special testing accommodations are necessary. The letter must have an original signature from the professional and be dated no more than five (5) years prior to application. Faxes and photocopies will not be accepted. Where applicable, copies of diagnostic reports should also be submitted.

Official documentation regarding your disability including the required ADA Accommodation Request Form must be submitted to NCBTMB at the time you apply. Special accommodations will be provided at no additional charge.

Policy on non-discrimination

NCBTMB does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, or physical disability.

12 TEST CENTERS AND DATES

NCBTMB contracts with Prometric to develop, administer, and deliver the Board Certification exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork—BCETMB. Test takers benefit from Prometric's extensive test delivery network with thousands of testing locations across the country and the opportunity to take the exam five days a week.

Please do not wait until the last week to schedule your exam as appointment times are limited. Extensions will not be given due to lack of availability at the testing center.

Please note you must have a current/valid Government I.D. and that visitors are not allowed in the test center.

Childcare is not provided and children are not allowed in the testing center.

Any violation of testing policies and procedures may result in dismissal from the testing center, cancellation of exam scores and forfeiture of eligibility for certification and exam fees. Directions and tutorials to testing centers may be found on the Prometric website at www.prometric.com.

13 SCHEDULING YOUR EXAM

All eligible candidates will receive an "Authorization to Test" email. Candidates can schedule appointments by calling Prometric at 1-800-856-4139 or using its online scheduling service at www.prometric.com. If your eligibility includes special ADA accommodations, you **MUST** schedule your exam by calling Prometric directly.

Be sure you plan your exam date well in advance. You should also pick alternate dates and times, just in case your first choice is not available. Exam appointments are subject to change if the test center is closed for some reason.

14 NCBTMB STUDY GUIDE

Looking for a study guide? NCBTMB's Online Practice Exam is available for subscription purchase through the Resource Center at shop.ncbtmb.org.

The NCBTMB Online Practice Exam provides access to thousands of sample test questions, personalized reports, identifiable reports of your strengths and weaknesses, and much more.

One, three, and six-month subscriptions are available.

15 COMPUTER BASED TESTING

You will take your examination using Computer Based Testing (CBT) technology. You do not need extensive computer experience to take the examination. At the beginning of your examination, a tutorial will be provided on how to take the test. You will be instructed on how to provide responses to the items that appear on the examination. Once you begin your test, you will not be able to go back to the tutorial section.

DO NOT click “End Exam” until you have completed the exam and all reviews.

When “End Exam” is selected, the examination will end, and you will not be able to review or change any answers. Staff at the testing center will only be able to answer questions that you might have about CBT—they have no knowledge about the exam content. Your exam will be scored as soon as you are finished. You will receive a diagnostic score report at the testing center following the completion of your exam. This is **not** an official score report.

16 EXAMINATION DAY

Arrival Time

You must arrive at the Test Center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled appointment to complete the admission process required before testing begins.

What to Bring on Exam Day

Testing centers utilize biometric procedures for validating candidate identification. The candidate’s government issued photo ID will be scanned, the candidate will be photographed, and other security procedures will be enacted.

The candidate must present at least one form of identification, which must include a current, valid (not expired) government issued picture ID and your signature. This could include:

- Driver’s License
- Military ID Card
- Passport
- State ID Card

The primary form of identification listed above **MUST** be issued by the national government in the country where you are testing. If your government issued identification is from a country other than the country in which you are testing, you must present your passport for identification. The passport must be current (not expired).

A Social Security Card is **NOT** an acceptable form of identification.

You do not need to bring your Confirmation Letter to the testing site.

Late Arrival

Candidates who arrive late for their exam will lose their reservation. They will be considered absent. Candidates must arrive at the Test Center thirty (30) minutes before their scheduled appointment to complete the admission process required before testing begins.

Inclement Weather

If severe weather or a natural disaster makes the testing center inaccessible or unsafe, the exam will be canceled. Exams that are canceled due to bad weather, will be rescheduled as soon as possible, without additional charge. Candidates should contact Prometric to determine if the center is closed and for rescheduling information.

Exam Security

When you arrive at the testing center, you will be asked to sign in on a test center log, present your identification, and submit biometric samples (such as fingerprint or palm

scan). Failure to comply with any of these requirements may result in your dismissal from the testing center and/or forfeiture of eligibility to test.

No materials, notes, papers and/or electronic devices of any kind, other than a visual aid pre-approved in writing by NCBTMB pursuant to the ADA Accommodation Request Form, are permitted in the examination room or center.

The performance of all candidates is monitored and will be analyzed to detect fraud. No candidate is permitted to give or receive assistance from others during the testing period. In the event that a test proctor observes or is notified that an applicant is behaving unethically during the exam (including such time an applicant is outside the examination room), such applicant's examination results shall be withheld pending further review.

Examples of unethical conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized possession, receipt or disclosure of materials relating to the examination during or after the examination testing period;
- Use of a cell phone or other communication device during the examination testing period;
- Other evidence indicating the security of the examination has been breached;
- Any other assistance that would provide the recipient of such information with an advantage while taking the current or future examination.

Any individual suspected of such a violation will be subject to NCBTMB disciplinary and/or legal action.

Additionally, no test materials, notes, documents or memoranda of any kind are to be taken from the examination room. Any individual who removes or attempts to remove exam materials will be subject to NCBTMB disciplinary and/or legal action.

Candidates in violation of any NCBTMB testing policy are subject to forfeiture of examination fee, cancellation of exam scores, forfeiture of eligibility to test and disciplinary and/or legal action. Sanctions could result in the removal or

denial of certification.

All exam materials, including all questions and all forms of the exam, are copyrighted and the property of NCBTMB. Any distribution of these materials through reproduction, or oral or written communication, is strictly prohibited and punishable by law.

Prometric Test Center Regulations

Candidates are required to be professional, civil and respectful always while on the premises of the test center. All exams are continuously monitored by video and audio recording, physical walk-throughs, and through the observation window. The Test Center Administrator (TCA) is authorized to dismiss you from the test session for a violation of any of the Test Center Regulations, including exhibiting abusive behavior towards the TCAs or other candidates. If you are found to have violated any of the regulations during your exam, the TCA is required to notify Prometric and your test sponsor. Prometric, alone or in conjunction with your test sponsor, shall then take any further action necessary to sanction your conduct, up to and including invalidation of your test score and/or pursuit of civil or criminal charges.

Prometric Test Center Check-In Procedures and Breaks

- Original, valid (unexpired), government issued photo & signature bearing identification is required in order to take an exam.
- Validity and the number of acceptable IDs are predetermined by your test sponsor.
- You will be scanned with a metal detector wand prior to every entry into the test room.
- You will be required to raise your pants legs above your ankles, empty and turn all pockets inside-out and raise shirt sleeves above your wrists prior to every entry into the test room.
- If you are wearing eyeglasses you will be required to remove them for visual inspection to ensure they don't contain a recording device. Large jewelry items must be stored in your locker due to concerns over concealed recording devices.

- Exams may have scheduled or unscheduled breaks, as determined by your test sponsor. Each time you leave the test room you must sign-out.
- The TCA will inform you what is permitted during exam breaks, specifically regarding whether access to your locker, and access to cell phones and notes within it, is permitted or not. All candidates must inform the TCA before accessing a stored item during a break, including medicine. Repeated or lengthy departures from the test room will be reported to the test sponsor.
- Upon return from a break, without exception, you must go through all security checks, present valid ID, sign-in and, if required by the test sponsor, provide a fingerprint to be re-admitted to the test room.

Prohibited Items and Examinee Conduct in the Test Center

- Weapons are not allowed in any Prometric Test Center.
- Unauthorized personal items may not be brought into the test room. Such items include, but are not limited to: outerwear, hats, food, drinks, purses, briefcases, notebooks, watches, cell phones, electronic devices, or wearable technology.
- Written notes, published materials and other testing aids are strictly prohibited in the test room, except where allowed by your test sponsor. Test center staff will refer to the applicable Client Practices for allowances.
- Written notes or electronic devices discovered in the test room will be confiscated by the Test Center Administrator.
- Only soft ear plugs (with no wires/cords attached) and center-supplied tissues are permitted in the test room.
- All materials issued by the TCA must be returned at the conclusion of testing. Used scratch paper must be returned before new scratch paper will be issued by the TCA during your exam.
- Light clothing items removed for comfort such as sweaters, suit jackets, scarves, etc., must be hung on the examinee's chair, not placed in laps or on the workstation desktop. Outerwear such as heavy coats, parkas, rain coats, etc., is not permitted in the test room.

- Talking to other candidates in the test room, referring to their screens, testing materials or written notes is strictly prohibited.

Note: Client/test sponsor practice policies shall supersede these regulations if a conflict exists.

Your Privacy

Your exam results will be encrypted and transmitted to Prometric and to the exam sponsor. The testing center does not keep any information other than when and where your exam was taken.

The Prometric Privacy Policy Statement provides additional information regarding this; you can obtain this by visiting prometric.com or by contacting Prometric at 1-800-856-4139.

17 RESULTS & SCORE REPORTS

Once you have finished taking the exam, the computer will score your performance on the test. The diagnostic score report will be issued to you after you have completed the test. Your performance will be communicated as either 'Pass' or 'No Pass'.

A candidate's performance on examinations shall remain confidential unless otherwise stipulated by the examinee.

If you wish to obtain an official score report, you will need to login to your NCBTMB account and complete the "Score Report Request" form found under "Request Forms" There is a \$25.00 fee per score report.

If you fail the exam, you will be given diagnostic information about your overall performance. The information will identify areas of weakness, should you wish to try again. The diagnostic score report will also provide information on how to apply for a future exam.

Unlike cases of individual candidate misconduct, occasionally testing irregularities occur that affect a group of test takers. Such problems include, but are not limited to,

administrative errors, defective equipment or materials, improper access to test content and/or the unauthorized general availability of test content, as well as other disruptions of test administrations (e.g. natural disasters and other emergencies). In such cases an incident report must be filled out before leaving the Prometric test facility.

When group-testing irregularities occur, Prometric will conduct an investigation to provide information to NCBTMB. Based on this information, NCBTMB may direct Prometric either not to score the test or to cancel the test score. When it is appropriate to do so, NCBTMB will arrange with Prometric to give affected test takers the opportunity to take the test again as soon as possible, without charge. Affected test takers will be notified of the reasons for the cancellation and their options for retaking the test. NCBTMB's appeals process does not apply to group testing irregularities.

18 IF YOU FAIL THE EXAM

If you fail the Board Certification Examination, you may retake it after 45 days from the time you took the original test. You may only take the Board Certification two (2) times within a six (6) month period.

NCBTMB's Policy on Challenging Results

If you need to challenge the exam results based on the content of the exam, contact NCBTMB directly at 1-800-296-0664.

An applicant shall have thirty (30) days to file a written request for an appeal following receipt of such notice that they were unsuccessful in their attempt on any NCBTMB examination.

If the appeal is based on examination content, such request shall be sent to the VP of Educational Support by certified mail, overnight express mail, or such other delivery method containing written verification of its delivery. The VP of Educational Support shall notify the NCBTMB Examination Development Committee about the written request for an appeal.

If the appeal is based on scoring of an examination, such request shall be sent to the NCBTMB testing vendor by certified mail, overnight express mail, or such other delivery method containing written verification of its delivery. The testing vendor will notify the applicant of their final determination. The testing vendor's determination is final and no further appeals are allowed.

3/5 Failure Policy for the Board Certification Exam

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score after three (3) attempts:

- Must submit **\$250** reexamination fee and proof of completing 100 hours of additional education before they can test again. NCBTMB recommends that education is in the core curriculum and/or areas of weakness.
- Will then be allowed two (2) additional attempts to successfully pass the examination.

If the candidate fails the examination five (5) times, the candidate will be required to submit:

- **\$250** reexamination fee.
- Proof of completing 500 hours of additional education before they can test again. NCBTMB recommends that education is in the core curriculum and/ or areas of weakness. Proof of additional education may be demonstrated by the submission of:
 - o An additional transcript from a school, or
 - o Certificates of completion demonstrating that the required hours were taken.

A candidate can only take the Board Certification exam a total of eight (8) times.

The Board Certification exam can only be taken twice within a six (6) month period. Candidates must wait a period of forty-five (45) days between tests.

19 CERTIFICATION LENGTH

Your Board Certification in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork certification will remain current for a period of two (2) years from the date you become Board Certified.

During that time, use the designation of “BCTMB” (Board Certified in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork) after your name to identify yourself as being Board Certified. You will receive a certificate that you can frame.

20 RECORDS RETENTION

Records of candidates who test under the policies and procedures in this handbook will have records retained for eight (8) years. These documents shall remain confidential and be deleted after the eight-year cycle is complete. NCBTMB will maintain electronic records of all applicants and certificants, subject to the retention policy. Test scores (passing and failing) are maintained indefinitely for all candidates in a secure electronic format.

All applications for recertification, and their supporting documentation, are maintained by NCBTMB for a period of four (4) years (two recertification cycles). Inactive records (i.e. certificants whose certification period has expired) that remain idle for a period of three years shall be purged from NCBTMB's archive of records.

21 RECERTIFICATION PROGRAM

You must recertify every two (2) years to maintain your certification status.

Recertification is a process whereby the Board Certified practitioner demonstrates ongoing efforts to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform in a professional and ethical manner. Recertification also helps assure

the public that the Board Certified practitioner remains committed to adhering to the NCBTMB Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. You may begin earning credits toward recertification the day after you pass the exam.

You can review the current recertification requirements at www.ncbtmb.org to learn more about this process and to prepare for your continued education. If you have any additional questions about recertification, please call NCBTMB at 1-800-296-0664 or email info@ncbtmb.org.

22 CERTIFICANTS REGISTRY

NCBTMB releases the names and business telephone numbers of Board Certified practitioners upon request, for consumers and professional opportunities. Please notify NCBTMB by phone or email if you do not want your name to be released.

Additionally, NCBTMB offers a practitioner locator service on its website. This service allows consumers the opportunity to locate Board Certified therapists by name, city, or zip code. You will be included in the Practitioner Locator Program unless you state that you don't want to be included.

23 WWW.NCBTMB.ORG

The NCBTMB web site is a valuable tool; it answers most questions you have about the examinations, as well as additional NCBTMB product or service offerings. NCBTMB encourages you to visit the website for answers to general questions.

24 CONTACTING STAFF

NCBTMB staff can be reached Monday – Friday between 8:00am and 5:00pm Central Standard Time at 1-800-296-0664. Calls are taken in the order received. Information can be readily obtained at www.NCBTMB.org. You may also send us an e-mail at info@NCBTMB.org.

Moving?

NCBTMB makes every effort to keep the most current mailing and email addresses of its certificants; however, we need your help to do so. If you move, change your name or change your mailing or email address please contact NCBTMB as soon as possible. Please call NCBTMB at 1-800-296-0664 or go online at www.NCBTMB.org to update your Certificant profile with address changes.

25 DOES YOUR ID MATCH YOUR APPLICATION NAME?

NCBTMB and our test vendor, Prometric, will not allow identification (ID) discrepancies. Please make sure that your photo ID and the name on the NCBTMB application do not result in any of the following discrepancies.

- Substitute for either the first or last name are not permitted
 - o “Smith” to “Jones”
 - o “Mary” to “Margaret”
- Incorrect letters on any documentation
 - o “Diller” vs. “Ditter”
- Maiden name as a middle name on one document, while given middle name is used on another document
 - o “Mary Elizabeth Smith” vs. “Mary Jones Smith”

Legal name changes must be approved by NCBTMB prior to scheduling an appointment. Name discrepancies are one of the most common reasons why applicants are not allowed to test. If you encounter one of the

ID/name discrepancies above, or if the name on your application does not match your current/valid Government I.D., the Prometric testing center has been instructed to not allow you to test. You will forfeit your exam and all associated fees. Please contact NCBTMB to discuss how to resolve these ID/name discrepancies if this relates to you.

26 YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO US!

Update your personal information online or call if:

- Your school filled out your application with their contact information.
- You have moved.
- You have changed your email address.
- Your phone number has changed.
- You have a name change

BOARD CERTIFICATION EXAM (BCETMB) CONTENT OUTLINE

I. Massage Modalities, Techniques, And Manual Forces (20%)

• Knowledge

- General massage protocols
- Compression
- Tension/decompression
- Friction/shearing
- Bending
- PNF, MFR, pin and stretch, etc.
- Torsion
- Range of motion
- Muscle Energy Techniques
- Stretching
- Hydrotherapy
- Indications and contraindications
- Vibration (jostling, shaking)
- Tapotement
- Client/patient positioning
- Special population (pregnancy massage, oncology massage, etc.)
- Appropriate tools and appropriate use
- Efficient body mechanics
- Benefits and effects of modalities (forms), and techniques
- Modality literacy

Skills

- Determine applicable massage techniques when working with clients
- Apply massage techniques safely
- Perform massage on special populations (athletes, geriatric, prenatal, etc.)
- Identify contraindications and apply affective techniques
- Identify fundamental characteristics of bodywork modalities
- Perform proper body mechanics while working with different populations
- Position clients for comfort and safety

II. Applied Science: Anatomy, Physiology, Kinesiology, Pathology/Injury, and Pharmacology (25%)

Knowledge

- Anatomy (structure of the human body including joints, tissues, muscles, functions, origins, insertions, and actions, nerve structure, etc.)
- Physiology – systems of the body with:
 - i. in-depth knowledge in muscle, skeletal, and nervous systems
 - ii. intermediate knowledge in integumentary, cardiovascular, lymphatic and digestive systems
 - iii. basic knowledge in respiratory, endocrine, reproductive and urinary systems
- Kinesiology (mechanics of body movement including levers, agonists, antagonists, synergist, etc.)
- Pharmacology (contraindications of prescription and non-prescription medication, implications for massage, etc.)
- Standard precautions
- Endangerment sites

Skills

- Identify structures and functions of all body systems
- Identify muscle and joint physiology
- Recognize mechanics of body movement – agonists, antagonists and synergists
- Identify and apply range of motion techniques – passive, active, active assisted and resistive range of motion
- Identify endangerment/cautionary sites
- Recognize muscle and orthopedic testing
- Identify indications and contraindications of common prescription drugs
- Determine proper stretching techniques and “end feels”

III. Professional Communication (15%)

Knowledge

- Medical terminology
- How to communicate with client/patient in understandable terms
- Reporting formats (appropriate language in medical history, treatment plan, SOAP notes, EMR etc.)
- HIPAA
- Communication with clients/patients (asking questions to clarify information)
- Client/patient sensitivity and vulnerabilities (how to make clients comfortable during treatment)
- Verbal and non-verbal cues
- Informed consent

Skills

- Effectively communicate with clients when explaining treatment plans
- Describe techniques, anatomy, physiology and kinesiology in understandable terms
- Identify HIPAA procedures
- Work within client comfort levels
- Adapt to verbal and non-verbal cues when working with clients
- Document sessions appropriate to the work setting – SOAP, EMR, spa etc.
- Uphold all HIPAA confidentiality standards
- Effectively communicate in proper medical terminology when working with other healthcare professionals

IV. Professionalism & Ethics (10%)

Knowledge

- Current standard of care for safe and effective massage
- Professional boundaries
- Draping laws and techniques
- When to refer clients to other health professionals
- When, why and how to refuse treatment
- How to report misconduct and who to report to
- Transference and countertransference

Skills

- Maintain proper physical and emotional boundaries
- Respect client's right to say no
- Identify when to refer out and whom to refer clients with pathologies
- Identify transference and countertransference situations
- Identify when to refuse to treat clients
- Identify correct entities to report client or fellow massage therapist's misconduct

V. Laws & Business Practices (5%)

Knowledge

- Appropriate draping
- Continuing education requirements
- Scope of practice and applicable licensing laws
- Record keeping (business and client/patient)

Skills

- Maintain client confidentiality
- Perform only within the massage therapy scope of practice
- Maintain appropriate draping for client protection and privacy
- Represent educational and professional qualifications honestly
- Demonstrate proper business and client record keeping
- Abide by national organizations' code of conduct and policies
- Comply with all federal state and local laws

VI. Assessment (25%)

Knowledge

- Comprehensive intake
- Interview and data collection techniques
- Observation techniques (posture deviation, etc.)
- Range of motion (normal and abnormal body motions)
- Treatment session planning techniques in collaboration with client/patient and other healthcare professionals when necessary
- Indications and contraindications
- Functional assessments and reassessments
- Customized treatments
- Pain scale and pain management
- Medical terminology (SOAP charting, etc.)
- Clinical reasoning (analyzing information from client/patient)
- Research associated with massage therapy

Skills

- Conduct an effective and thorough intake interview to gather information
- Interpret client health history information
- Customize treatment plans to fit the needs of each client
- Discuss treatment plan and alternate plans if requested by the client
- Determine common pain scale descriptions
- Utilize palpatory skills to assess soft tissue
- Perform and interpret active and passive range of motion assessments
- Perform and interpret postural analysis
- Perform and interpret gait assessment
- Perform and interpret manual resistance tests
- Perform and interpret special orthopedic tests
- Reassess client movement, strength and range of motion post - treatment
- Document all findings properly pre and post treatment and change treatment plans accordingly
- Collaborate with other healthcare professionals as needed

- Communicate using appropriate medical terminology when speaking with other medical professionals and in official documentation
- Work effectively as part of an integrated healthcare team
- Recognize and analyze research
- Identify different areas of research

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Preamble

These Standards of Practice for the profession of therapeutic massage and bodywork are the guiding principles by which certificants and applicants for certification conduct their day-to-day responsibilities within their scope of practice. These principles help to assure that all professional behaviors are conducted in the most ethical, compassionate, and responsible manner. Through these Standards of Practice, NCBTMB seeks to establish and uphold high standards, traditions, and principles of the practices that constitute the profession of therapeutic massage and bodywork.

The Standards are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and therefore, are stated in observable and measurable terms intended as minimum levels of practice to which certificants and applicants for certification are held accountable. Upon submission of the application for the National Certification Examinations, each applicant for certification must agree to uphold and abide by the NCBTMB Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and applicable policies. Certificants or applicants' failure to comply with the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice as provided herein constitutes professional misconduct and may result in sanctions, or other appropriate disciplinary actions, including the suspension or revocation of certification.

NCBTMB certificants and applicants for certification are obligated to report unethical behavior and violations of the Code of Ethics and/or the Standards of Practice they reasonably and in good faith believe have been performed by other NCBTMB certificants and applicants for certification to NCBTMB.

These Standards of Practice reflect NCBTMB's clear commitment that certificants and applicants for certification provide an optimal level of service and strive for excellence in their practice. This includes remaining in good standing with NCBTMB, committing to continued personal and professional growth through continuing education, and understanding and accepting that personal and professional actions reflect on the integrity of the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession and NCBTMB. Certificants and applicants for certification are responsible for showing and maintaining professional compliance with the Standards of Practice.

NCBTMB requires certificants and applicants for certification to conduct themselves in a highly professional and dignified manner. NCBTMB will not consider and/or adjudicate complaints against certificants and applicants for certification that are based solely on consumer related issues or are based on competitive marketplace issues.

As the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession evolves, so, too, will the Standards of Practice. The Standards of Practice are, therefore, a live and dynamic document and subject to revision in keeping with the changing demands and expectations of the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession.

Standard i: Professionalism

The certificant or applicant for certification must provide optimal levels of professional therapeutic massage and bodywork services and demonstrate excellence in practice by promoting healing and well-being through responsible, compassionate and respectful touch. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. adhere to the NCBTMB Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, policies and procedures
- b. comply with the peer review process conducted by the NCBTMB Ethics and Standards Committee regarding any alleged violations of the NCBTMB Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

- c. treat each client with respect, dignity and worth
- d. use professional verbal, nonverbal and written communications
- e. provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for the client and which, at a minimum, meets all legal requirements for health and safety
- f. use standard precautions to insure professional hygienic practices and maintain a level of personal hygiene appropriate for practitioners in the therapeutic setting
- g. wear clothing that is clean, modest, and professional
- h. obtain voluntary and informed consent from the client prior to initiating the session
- i. if applicable, conduct an accurate needs assessment, develop a plan of care with the client, and update the plan as needed
- j. use appropriate draping to protect the client's physical and emotional privacy
- k. be knowledgeable of his/her scope of practice and practice only within these limitations
- l. refer to other professionals when in the best interest of the client and practitioner
- m. seek other professional advice when needed
- n. respect the traditions and practices of other professionals and foster collegial relationships
- o. not falsely impugn the reputation of any colleague
- p. use the initials BCTMB only to designate his/her professional ability and competency to practice therapeutic massage and bodywork
- q. remain in good standing with NCBTMB
- r. understand that the NCBTMB certificate may be displayed prominently in the certificant's principal place of practice
- s. use the NCBTMB logo and certification number on business cards, brochures, advertisements, and stationery only in a manner that is within established NCBTMB guidelines
- t. not duplicate the NCBTMB certificate for purposes other than verification of the practitioner's credentials
- u. immediately return the certificate to NCBTMB if certification is revoked
- v. inform NCBTMB of any changes or additions to information included in his/her application for NCBTMB certification or recertification

Standard ii: Legal and Ethical Requirements

The certificant or applicant for certification must comply with all the legal requirements in applicable jurisdictions regulating the profession of therapeutic massage and bodywork. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. obey all applicable local, state, and federal laws
- b. refrain from any behavior that results in illegal, discriminatory, or unethical actions
- c. accept responsibility for his/her own actions
- d. report to the proper authorities any alleged violations of the law by other certificants or applicants for certification
- e. maintain accurate and truthful records
- f. report to NCBTMB any criminal conviction of, or plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or no contest to, a crime in any jurisdiction (other than a minor traffic offense) by him/herself and by other certificants or applicants for certification

- g. report to NCBTMB any pending litigation and resulting resolution related to the certificant or applicant for certification's professional practice and the professional practice of other certificants or applicants for certification
- h. report to NCBTMB any pending complaints in any state or local government or quasi-government board or agency against his/her professional conduct or competence, or that of another certificant, and the resulting resolution of such complaint
- i. respect existing publishing rights and copyright laws, including, but not limited to, those that apply to NCBTMB's copyright-protected examinations

Standard iii: Confidentiality

The certificant or applicant for certification shall respect the confidentiality of client information and safeguard all records. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. protect the confidentiality of the client's identity in conversations, all advertisements, and any and all other matters unless disclosure of identifiable information is requested by the client in writing, is medically necessary, is required by law or for purposes of public protection
- b. protect the interests of clients who are minors or clients who are unable to give voluntary and informed consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian
- c. solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/therapist relationship
- d. share pertinent information about the client with third parties when required by law or for purposes of public protection
- e. maintain the client files for a minimum period of four years
- f. store and dispose of client files in a secure manner

Standard iv: Business Practices

The certificant or applicant for certification shall practice with honesty, integrity, and lawfulness in the business of therapeutic massage and bodywork. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. provide a physical setting that is safe and meets all applicable legal requirements for health and safety
- b. maintain adequate and customary liability insurance
- c. maintain adequate progress notes for each client session, if applicable
- d. accurately and truthfully inform the public of services provided
- e. honestly represent all professional qualifications and affiliations
- f. promote his/her business with integrity and avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest
- g. advertise in a manner that is honest, dignified, accurate and representative of services that can be delivered and remains consistent with the NCBTMB Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- h. advertise in a manner that is not misleading to the public and shall not use sensational, sexual or provocative language and/or pictures to promote business
- i. comply with all laws regarding sexual harassment
- j. not exploit the trust and dependency of others, including clients and employees/co-workers
- k. display/discuss a schedule of fees in advance of the session that is clearly understood by the client or potential client
- l. make financial arrangements in advance that are clearly understood by and safeguard the best

- interests of the client or consumer
- k. follow acceptable accounting practices
- l. file all applicable municipal, state and federal taxes
- m. maintain accurate financial records, contracts and legal obligations, appointment records, tax reports and receipts for at least four years

Standard v: Roles & Boundaries

The certificant or applicant for certification shall adhere to ethical boundaries and perform the professional roles designed to protect both the client and the practitioner, and safeguard the therapeutic value of the relationship. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. recognize his/her personal limitations and practice only within these limitations
- b. recognize his/her influential position with the client and not exploit the relationship for personal or other gain
- c. recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter-transference between the client and the certificant
- d. avoid dual or multidimensional relationships that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of the client or employees and/or coworkers
- e. not engage in any sexual activity with a client
- f. acknowledge and respect the client's freedom of choice in the therapeutic session
- g. respect the client's right to refuse the therapeutic session or any part of the therapeutic session
- h. refrain from practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substances (with the exception of a prescribed dosage of prescription medication which does not impair the certificant)
- i. have the right to refuse and/or terminate the service to a client who is abusive or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance

Standard vi: Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

The certificant or applicant for certification shall refrain from any behavior that sexualizes, or appears to sexualize, the client/therapist relationship. The certificant or applicant for certification recognizes the intimacy of the therapeutic relationship may activate practitioner and/or client needs and/or desires that weaken objectivity and may lead to sexualizing the therapeutic relationship. In his/her professional role the certificant or applicant for certification shall:

- a. refrain from participating in a sexual relationship or sexual conduct with the client, whether consensual or otherwise, from the beginning of the client/therapist relationship and for a minimum of six months after the termination of the client/therapist relationship unless a pre-existing relationship exists between a certificant or applicant for certification and client prior to the certificant or applicant for certification applying to be certified by NCBTMB
- b. in the event that the client initiates sexual behavior, clarify the purpose of the therapeutic session, and, if such conduct does not cease, terminate or refuse the session
- c. recognize that sexual activity with clients, students, employees, supervisors, or trainees is prohibited even if consensual
- d. not touch the genitalia
- e. only perform therapeutic treatments beyond the normal narrowing of the ear canal and normal narrowing of the nasal passages as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary written consent

- f. only perform therapeutic treatments in the oropharynx as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary consent
- g. only perform therapeutic treatments into the anal canal as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary written consent
- h. only provide therapeutic breast massage as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary written consent from the client

CODE OF ETHICS

Revised September 2017 | Copyright 2017: NCBTMB: National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork, Inc. Code of Ethics. All Rights Reserved.

NCBTMB Certificants shall act in a manner that justifies public trust and confidence, enhances the reputation of the profession, and safeguards the interest of individual clients. Certificants will:

- I. Have a sincere commitment to provide the highest quality of care to those who seek their professional services;
- II. Represent their qualifications honestly, including education and professional affiliations, and provide only those services that they are qualified to perform;
- III. Accurately inform clients, other health care practitioners, and the public of the scope and limitations of their discipline;
- IV. Acknowledge the limitations of and contraindications for massage and bodywork and refer clients to appropriate health professionals;
- V. Provide treatment only where there is reasonable expectation that it will be advantageous to the client;
- VI. Consistently maintain and improve professional knowledge and competence, striving for professional excellence through regular assessment of personal and professional strengths and weaknesses and through continued education training;
- VII. Conduct their business and professional activities with honesty and integrity, and respect the inherent worth of all persons;
- VIII. Refuse to unjustly discriminate against clients and/or health professionals;
- IX. Safeguard the confidentiality of the client's identity and information in all conversations, advertisements, and any and all other matters unless disclosure of identifiable information is requested by the client in writing, is medically necessary or is required by law;
- X. Respect the client's right to treatment with informed and voluntary consent. The certified practitioner will obtain and record the informed consent of the client, or client's advocate, before providing treatment. This consent may be written or verbal;
- XI. Respect the client's right to refuse, modify or terminate treatment regardless of prior consent given;
- XII. Provide draping and treatment in a way that ensures the safety, comfort and privacy of the client;
- XIII. Exercise the right to refuse to treat any person or part of the body for just and reasonable cause;

- XIV. Refrain, under all circumstances, from participating in a sexual relationship or sexual conduct

with the client, whether consensual or otherwise, from the beginning of the client/therapist relationship and for a minimum of six (6) months after the termination of the client therapist relationship, unless an ongoing current sexual relationship existed prior to the date the therapeutic relationship began;

XV. Avoid any interest, activity or influence which might be in conflict with the practitioner's obligation to act in the best interests of the client or the profession;

XVI. Respect the client's boundaries with regard to privacy, disclosure, exposure, emotional expression, beliefs and the client's reasonable expectations of professional behavior. Practitioners will respect the client's autonomy;

XVII. Refuse any gifts or benefits that are intended to influence a referral, decision or treatment, or that are purely for personal gain and not for the good of the client; and

XVIII. Follow the NCBTMB Standards of Practice, this Code of Ethics, and all policies, procedures, guidelines, regulations, codes, and requirements promulgated by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork, Inc. Job Task Analysis Explained

JOB TASK ANALYSIS EXPLAINED

A job analysis study is conducted every five years to make sure the exams are current. The most recent job analysis for the BCETMB was conducted in 2017. Practitioners from across the country are surveyed to assist in evaluating the level of knowledge and skills expected within the industry.

A job analysis gives a detailed description of job activities. It also shows the different activities that are performed, their significance with regard to public protection, and how important they are for those entering the profession. The exam questions are written based on these findings.

A questionnaire of job tasks was also given to practitioners of touch therapies as part of the job analysis process. The questionnaire included a list of tasks, knowledge statements, and professional standards.

The questionnaire asked practitioners to rate how relevant the job tasks are to their daily practice of touch therapy.

A job analysis helps to ensure the exam content is up-to-date. But that is not the only thing that is needed to make sure the exams are fair. All of the questions on the exams undergo an extensive review process by a group of subject matter experts (SMEs) and experts at Prometric. These experts ensure that the exams are actually measuring a person's level of knowledge. After the SMEs and experts at Prometric review the exam, they make final recommendations for questions to use. Once questions have been selected, they are pre-tested so we know that only questions that measure your knowledge are placed and scored on the exam. Writing, reviewing and pre-testing questions is an on-going process.

NCBTMB's examinations are developed in accordance with Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA and NCME, 1999) and the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (EEOC, 1978).

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This handbook contains information on how to become Board Certified in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork or Nationally Certified in Therapeutic Massage. To avoid problems in processing your application, it is important that you follow the guidelines outlined in this handbook and comply with the deadlines detailed herein. If you have any questions about the policies, procedures or processing of your application, please contact the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB) online at www.ncbtmb.org or by phone at 1-800-296-0664. Additional copies of the handbook may be obtained from our web site free of charge.

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