



Approved Provider Program Structure and Rules

New Instructor Qualifications (All New Applicants)

- Holds a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree from a college or university accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or a substantially equivalent accrediting body of a foreign sovereign state, with a major in a subject directly related to the content of the program to be offered;
OR
- Has completed at least five years of professional experience in the practice of massage therapy;
AND
- Has a minimum of two years teaching experience in the subject matter;
OR
- Has completed a NCBTMB approved teacher training program in the modality of interest;
OR
- Has completed at least 100 hour of non-entry level education in the subject matter to be offered and has a minimum of two years of professional experience in the subject

Application Submission Process

- Portfolio review
 - Education
 - Experience
 - Expertise
- Course information
 - Course description
 - Learning outcomes/objectives
 - Course breakdown
- New York approval [form](#) (optional)

Approval Process

- Applications reviewed by NCBTMB staff to ensure:
 - Instructor/Organization
 - All requested information is present, including courses to be approved.
 - Instructor(s)/organization experience matches content of courses submitted.
 - Course
 - Course is within the NCBTMB acceptable content list.
 - Course information aligns with course titles, outcomes, objectives.
 - Course content includes proper citations and does not contain more than 30% of its content from outside sources.



- Instructor/organization contact information (email address and/or phone) is included with every course for participant use from the time a course is purchased.
- Reasons for denial
 - The instructor/organization portfolio is incomplete or instructor/organization is determined not qualified.
 - Course contains unacceptable content.
 - Courses and applicants may be denied for any reason at the discretion of NCBTMB.

Applications requiring further review are submitted to the Approved Provider Committee. The committee may ask for additional information from the applicant. Once referred, the committee determines the final approval status.

Adding Additional Courses

- Each new course to be offered from an Approved Provider must be submitted for review.

Adding Additional Instructors

- All additional instructors teaching for approved organizations must be approved separately to ensure they are competent to teach the classes they have been submitted for.

Course Formats

Face to face

A face to face course is primarily made up of a synchronous education experience in which the learner and instructor are in the same location.

- A face to face course may include homework outside of the common learning environment in advance of, during or after the course for CE credit. Work outside of class should be classified as home study CE.

Home study course

A home study course is defined as synchronous and/or asynchronous education experiences in which learners are in a location remote (or separate) from the instructor. Courses can be distributed via website, email or as written material by the Approved Provider to the participant.

A final exam must be taken by all course participants. Completed exam must be submitted to the provider for grading. The requirements of the final exam are:



- If the final exam is in written form, it must contain a minimum of 5 multiple-choice questions, (containing at least 4 possible choices), per hour of class. Essay questions may also be used in a written final exam.
- Participant must receive a score of 70% or higher on the exam prior to receiving a Certificate of Achievement.
- Approved Provider must inform participants of the required passing exam score prior to administering the exam.

Live Webinars

A live webinar is defined as a synchronous education experience in which learners are in a location remote (or separate) from the instructor. Learners are receiving instruction in real time using webinar broadcasting technology. Rebroadcast webinars should be classified as home study.

Continuing education hours (CEs)

Rationale for the CEs offered for a course must be based on the content presented in the course. Approved providers must provide documentation to support assignment of CE hours when courses are approved. All CEs must be clearly documented for participants prior to purchasing the course.

Face to face course:

CEs for face to face education experiences should match the number of hours of instructions based on a 50 minute hour (meal breaks are excluded from instruction time.).

Home study courses:

- Below are suggested minimal criteria that may be used for assigning CEs to home study courses:
15,000 words read equals 1 CE
- One hour of video or audio equals 1 CE
- Providers may document additional CEs for course work beyond the word count (i.e. reflective assignments, additional reading).
- No additional CEs may be given beyond those approved unless the course is re-submitted for approval

Approved Providers may also work with an instructional designer to determine CE hours. Instructional designer must provide documentation of assignment of CE hours. Contact NCBTMB staff for additional information.



Acceptable Course Content

- Applications of massage and bodywork therapy for specific needs, conditions, or client populations
- Anatomy, physiology and kinesiology
- Research literacy
- Client assessment protocols, skills for client record keeping, strategies for interfacing with other health care providers
- Use of external agents such as water, light, sound, heat, cold, or topicals
- Body-centered or somatic psychology, psychophysiology, interpersonal skills – which may include communication skills, boundary functions, phenomena of transference, counter-transference and projection
- Standards of practice, professional ethics or state laws
- Strategies for the marketing of massage and bodywork therapy practices
- Theory or practice of ergonomic science as applied to therapist or client
- Hygiene, methods of infectious disease control, organization and management of the treatment environment
- The use of massage therapy tools and their specific needs (tools may not be sold during class time and the instructor must be able to supply students with the tools during class)
- Working with the muscles within the oral cavity for specific treatments, i.e. working on the masseter muscle in conjunction with TMJ Disorder
- ***Self-care courses concentrating on nutrition and/or diet only, but only as it enhances the learner's knowledge about the practice of massage therapy***
- ***Perform yoga/yoga teacher training programs (acceptable for therapist's self-care only)***
- ***Active strengthening/physical training (acceptable for therapist's self-care only)***
- Advanced science courses that contain content which goes beyond the massage therapist's scope of practice (as defined by state and/or local legislation), and that is instructive in understanding different systems of the body or human behavior more in depth. Click [here](#) for more information
- Energy work that includes “the application of professional therapeutic touch.”

NCBTMB only accepts 4 CEs per renewal period in self-care.



Unacceptable Course Content

- Diagnoses (allopathic-based) of clinical conditions
- Implementation of allopathic medical/surgical procedures
- Physically invasive modalities, e.g., ear candles, intra-anal, intra-vaginal modalities, etc.
- Incorporation of chiropractic/osteopathic, e.g., ballistic, thrust oriented or other services and procedures which require additional licensure or certification, i.e., Yoga or Pilates Instructor Certification, Physical Therapy, Personal Training, Weight Training
- Prescription of herbs, nutritional supplements, and /or pharmaceuticals
- Performing hypnosis
- Performing an aesthetician facial or exfoliation of cells from the body
- Performing electrical stimulation, using electrical devices on clients or ultrasound of any kind
- Psychological counseling
- Psychic, clairvoyance, telepathic, astrology, religious practices
- Dry needling and acupuncture
- Breaking or removing tissue from the body
- Cannabis oil
- Energy work that does not involve “the application of professional therapeutic touch”
- Aura techniques
- Crystal healing
- Qi Gong or Tai Chi
- Fire cupping or any procedure that works with fire
- Breast massage as part of anything other than medical procedures or prescribed by a physician (NCBTMB does accept breast massage when learning about oncology; specifically, breast cancer procedures)
- *Erroneous, misleading titles of modalities; a description of the course must be added to the title if the modality cannot be easily deciphered by the title*

NCBTMB has the right to reject any course content that does not adhere to federal laws and regulation, risks participant or instructor safety, and/or is not sufficiently backed up by research.

As with all continuing education, it is understood that the massage therapist is responsible for verifying that information provided in courses is within the therapist’s state and/or local scope of practice as defined by law. In addition, course participants should be advised that additional training and education is required to be truly proficient in any topic. Once courses are completed, Approved Providers provide Certificates of Achievement or Certificates of Completion. After taking Approved Provider’s course, a participant is not certified in a topic. Approved Providers are encouraged to include this information in course materials for participants.



Complaint Process for Course Participants

If you believe an NCBTMB Approved Provider has violated NCBTMB’s Approved Provider Code of Ethics, the Code of Conduct and/or Standards of Practice, which are located [here](#), please send us a formal letter containing the following information:

- Your name, address and phone number
- The name, address and phone number of the NCBTMB Approved Provider
- A detailed description of the incident in question
- A description of any steps that have been taken to address the situation in the complaint, and the results of any such steps
- Your signature

By filing a claim, you consent for NCBTMB to disclose all information in the complaint to the Approved Provider named in the complaint, NCBTMB’s staff and volunteer leadership team, and any other subject matter experts involved in evaluating the complaint

Please see Rules and Procedures for the Approved Provider Program for details of the complaint process.