

NCBTMB Accepts Advanced Courses for Board Renewal

NCBTMB Board Certified Massage Therapists are required to seek out and participate in additional continuing education courses to further advance practitioner skills and competencies, strengthen business skills, enhance modality knowledge and professional ethics, and develop a greater depth of advanced knowledge in order to demonstrate higher standards and skills than entry-level, state licensed massage therapists.

It has come to the attention of NCBTMB that several Board Certificants are currently taking more advanced courses. Advanced courses and modalities are important to our profession to further elevate practitioners' knowledge in science, business, and other realms—but may not necessarily be practiced legally without a trained professional present.

NCBTMB stands firm that all massage therapists—certified or not—may NOT practice beyond their legal Scope of Practice. It is important to note, however, that NCBTMB does encourage massage therapists to further educate themselves in other professions to better understand how to communicate and collaborate with other medical professionals to provide the best possible care for clients. Any massage therapist who wishes to practice other modalities outside of the Massage Therapy Scope of Practice must first attend and successfully graduate from that program.

Associate's Degrees and Higher

NCBTMB will accept medical and business courses from any accredited college and/or university to apply toward Board Certification Renewal. Several massage therapists are working toward additional degrees in the medical and business fields, and may submit these courses as long as they are taken within the allotted renewal period.

Education taken as part of a professional degree program, attending a professional conference for allied health and medical professions or other recognized areas related to the massage therapy profession, as well as research events, provide a broader educational and training experience for therapists and Approved Providers.

Advanced Anatomy, Physiology, Kinesiology, Medical, and Science Based Courses from NCBTMB Approved Providers

In the past, NCBTMB has denied courses containing information on diagnosis of pathologies, psychology, and advanced medical classes that were outside of the Massage Therapy Scope of Practice. After researching the information within these higher level courses, NCBTMB has chosen to accept them for Board Certification Renewal moving forward.

NCBTMB will accept these higher level courses because we believe that all medical information is useful and important for massage therapists to understand. Though massage therapists cannot diagnose pathologies, knowing the different procedures that can help clients and understanding clients' mental health will better prepare massage therapists to refer clients, as necessary, to the appropriate medical professional(s) with confidence.

Accepting these higher level courses means that NCBTMB is not limiting continuing education to strictly massage therapy. NCBTMB accepts education that will both directly and indirectly have a positive effect on massage therapists' careers through inter-professional education and collaboration.

Each course must first be approved by NCBTMB; additionally, each NCBTMB Approved Provider must add a disclaimer on any course material stating the class is approved by NCBTMB for massage therapists to further enhance education in the medical field. Course material must also clearly state that the procedures, diagnoses, and course information is beyond the Massage Therapy Scope of Practice and may not be practiced without further education and graduation from a program in that field.

Nutrition, Herbalism, Pharmacology and Exercise Courses from an NCBTMB Approved Provider

NCBTMB will accept Nutrition, Herbalism, Pharmacology, and Exercise courses for Board Certification Renewal. The following is the rationale for accepting each course category:

Nutrition: It is important massage therapists know how the body breaks down different nutrients and how different foods affect the body. Massage therapists are not able to suggest diets for clients without an additional degree; however, taking courses in this area would empower therapists to understand more about their client's health by their diet choices.

Herbalism: It is important massage therapists know how different herbs affect the body, as well as vital indications and contraindications of massage on clients when taking different herbs or supplements.

Pharmacology: It is important massage therapists know the effects, indications, and contraindications of massage on clients who are taking prescription medications.

Exercise: It is important massage therapists are aware of different exercises to better treat clients with sports-related injuries—empowering therapists to develop treatment plans and identify the muscles most affected by the injury.

Each course must first be approved by NCBTMB; additionally, each NCBTMB Approved Provider must add a disclaimer on all course material stating the class is approved by NCBTMB for massage therapists to enhance education. Course materials must also clearly state that massage therapists may not diagnose, prescribe, or suggest the use of any digestible materials or exercise programs without additional education and graduation from an approved program in the specific field/topic.

Instructor Qualifications for Advanced Modalities

Instructor qualifications and course education must meet or exceed the information taught for all advanced courses, as well as courses outside of the Massage Therapy Scope of Practice. Instructors teaching any/all courses that contain advanced information, diagnosis, or subscribing herbs or medications must first have obtained an advanced degree in the subject matter.