

## **Massage Therapy Exam**

By considering taking the National Certification Examination, you have taken an important initial step toward enhancement of your professional expertise. Upon passing the exam, a practitioner is certified for a period of four years. This national certification is recognized in at least 28 states and hundreds of municipalities. Because of the intensity of the exam and the significant outlay in money and time which precede taking it, any applicant is wise to be properly prepared. Licensure Exams is pleased to offer a comprehensive preparation course.

Carefully designed to measure knowledge in subject areas common to touch therapies regardless of their approach, the NCE (National Certification Examination) consists of 160 multiple choice items. No particular therapeutic approach is endorsed by the preparers of the examination, and no textbook will cover its entire content. Although the subject matter is wide in range, the test gives no penalty for guessing and does not contain trick questions. In each question one of the four multiple choice options is clearly the correct answer.

The \$225 application fee covers one test registration, one printed copy of the results, and a certificate for each applicant who passes. The printed report graphically represents an applicant's mastery level in each of the four areas tested so that strengths as well as weaknesses are apparent.

The test is offered only in English. A candidate whose first language is not English may petition to use a strict translation dictionary during the test. In addition those with physical disabilities will be provided needed special services upon written request.

Only those who have completed a therapeutic massage or body work course of study with at least 500 in-class clock hours or who submit a portfolio demonstrating expertise are even eligible to begin the application process. Once an application and supporting documentation have been submitted, the qualified applicant will receive an Authorization to Test letter. (To expedite the application process, it is possible to apply online.) Once an ATT letter is received, each individual candidate is responsible to register for a specific time and place of testing. Three months is allowed to complete testing. For any applicant who does not take the test within the specified time, reapplication (including payment) must be made.

Requiring 2 hours 40 minutes to complete, the examination covers four basic areas. Heaviest emphasis is placed upon the area of theory, assessment, and application of massage therapy and body work (41% of test). These questions include assessment issues; skills, techniques, and precautions; touch therapy modalities, and holistic principles. Human anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology receive second emphasis (27% of test). Including the Western classification of the 12 major body systems, biomechanics, and medical terminology, these questions cover the rudiments of non-Western approaches as well. Clinical pathology and recognition of various conditions provide content for 20% of the test. The final component of the exam is that of professional standards, ethics, and business practices (12% of test).

In each of the four content areas the test includes three levels of questions: factual recall, concept application, and problem solving. Nearly half the exam is scientific in nature. Although the understanding of terminology is foundational, a knowledge of terms alone is not enough to pass. The ability to correctly apply scientific and professional terms to decision making is necessary for many questions. Actual clinical experience and practice with a broad base of role playing scenarios will assure concepts have been synthesized, and this synthesis provides the needed background for difficult problem solving questions as well as for clinical expertise. For these scenario questions, the training offered by Licensure Exams is particularly effective. Confident in a comprehensive base of factual knowledge and alert to details represented in question scenarios, the well-prepared individual will demonstrate the competency required to pass the exam.

The testing procedure is precise. Prometric, the largest test delivery agency in the world, administers the exam via computer with CBT (Computer Based Training) technology. (For those unfamiliar with the computer system, an on-site tutorial is available the day of the test.) Allowing for an immediate pass/fail response, this system permits the applicant to leave the testing site knowing whether or not the test has been passed. For those who pass, the official certificate will be received within four weeks.

Only the nationally certified practitioner is permitted to use the NCTMB professional designation following his/her name. This title not only contributes credibility to the practitioner, it qualifies the therapist to be listed in the national registry of licensed therapeutic massage and body work professionals. By consulting this registry, a prospective client can be certain of finding a licensed, ethical, professional practitioner--and that practitioner could be you!