



CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

PROGRAM FOR BOARD CERTIFICATION IN MUSIC THERAPY



April 2026



The Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) Candidate Handbook **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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CONTACT US

All correspondence and requests for information concerning the CBMT Board Certification Examination should be directed to:

Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT)

506 E. Lancaster Ave., Suite 102
Downingtown, PA 19335

Phone: 1.800.765.CBMT (2268)
Local 610.269.8900

Email: info@cbmt.org

Web: www.cbmt.org

For questions regarding examination administration, contact:

PSI

18000 W. 105th Street
Olathe, KS 66061-7543

Phone: 913.895.4600

Fax: 913.895.4651

Email: info-AMP@goAMP.com

Web: psiexams.com/amp/



INTRODUCTION

MISSION & VISION

As your partner and advocate in music therapy, the mission of The Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) is to promote excellence by awarding board certification based on proven, up-to-date knowledge and competence in clinical practice.

As the only certifying board for music therapy — and with unwavering respect for the responsibilities of all music therapists — our vision is to ensure access to safe, effective music therapy services everywhere.

ACCREDITATION

CBMT is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. Our Music Therapist-Board Certification (MT-BC) program has been fully accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies since 1986. Our accreditation ensures our unconditional compliance with stringent testing and measurement standards.

HISTORY

Established in 1983 to bolster the professional's sense of accountability to those it served, CBMT is proud of our longstanding heritage as a recognized leader in the credentialing field. Today, thousands of music therapists in the United States and abroad hold the MT-BC credential from CBMT, a sign of growing professional commitment to excellence in music therapy.

Board Certification in Music Therapy (MT-BC) signifies higher learning and a deeper commitment to excellence in the profession. It also underscores your dedication to evidence-based therapeutic practices that improve lives.

At CBMT, we share and support your goal of enhancing the lives of patients. The core purpose of board certification is to provide an objective standard ensuring that all certificants are prepared to practice music therapy at the highest level.

Board certification also assists the public by identifying standards for the professional practice of music therapy. By ensuring comprehensive competency testing, we emphasize the importance and impact of what you do.

The CBMT Board Certification program consists of a computerized multiple-choice examination with 150 questions, developed by a committee of music therapists from diverse backgrounds. Exam questions are based on the Board Certification Domains, which are informed by the results of a Practice Analysis Study conducted among MT-BC practitioners. The examination defines the body of knowledge that represents competent practice in the profession of music therapy and identifies what a credentialed therapist may do in practice.

This Candidate Handbook and the associated [cbmt.org](https://www.cbmt.org) resources offer extensive support and guidance on preparing for the exam and achieving your board certification.

We are in your corner on your journey to success as a board-certified music therapist. Our commitment to you begins long before you take the certification exam, and it continues throughout your career.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The CBMT and PSI do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

EXAMINATION ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for Board Certification must have successfully completed the academic and clinical training requirements for music therapy, or their equivalent, as established by the American Music Therapy Association. To be eligible to sit for the examination, these requirements must be completed by the scheduled examination administration date.

If you are taking the examination for state licensure, please contact the CBMT office for further direction or refer to the CBMT website for State Licensure information.

INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATES

An international applicant for the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) Examination is an applicant who has completed their Music Therapy degree in a country outside of the USA or Canada. Applicants for Board Certification must have successfully completed all academic and clinical training requirements for their music therapy degree to apply for the board exam. For more information please review [CBMT INTERNATIONAL EXAM APPLICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES](#).



APPLYING FOR AN EXAMINATION

The CBMT Examination is administered by computer at approximately 300 PSI Test Centers geographically distributed throughout the United States and abroad. There are no application deadlines, and eligible candidates may submit their exam application and documentation at any time. CBMT highly recommends that you review the required documentation list before attempting to create a new exam application. See list [HERE](#).

The following steps outline the application process:

1. Access the [LOGIN](#) section on [cbmt.org](#) to create an account.
2. Click on **Candidates** and **Exam Application** to create, complete and submit the application to CBMT for review.
3. Submit the required documentation items see [REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY](#).
4. After all required items are received for your application, you will be prompted to log in to your CBMT account and pay the examination fee.
5. After your examination fee is processed, your testing record will be set up and you will receive an email in approximately 5 business days with the instructions to arrange your exam appointment with PSI. When notified you can schedule, you will see an Exam Authorization page in your Exam Application which contains your assigned Exam Scheduling ID# and your 90-day eligibility period to test.

The CBMT reserves the right to verify information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate.



SCHEDULING AN EXAMINATION

After your examination fee is processed, your testing record will be set up and you will receive an email in approximately 5 business days with the instructions to schedule your exam appointment with PSI.

After scheduling your exam appointment, you will receive an email from PSI confirming your appointment. This email confirmation contains important information regarding testing policies, the required time to report to the test center, directions and identification requirements to sign in at the test center. PSI will send out a reminder email 72 hours before the exam.

A candidate who fails to schedule an appointment for examination within the 90-day eligibility period forfeits the application and all fees paid to take the examination. A new exam application and examination fee are required to reapply for examination.

UNSCHEDULED CANDIDATES (WALK-INS) WILL NOT BE ADMITTED to the Test Center.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

NEW APPLICANTS

1. An official transcript of your Music Therapy coursework must be provided to CBMT. Official transcripts must be original and sent directly to CBMT from your school. Have paper transcripts mailed directly to the CBMT office. If ordering an electronic official transcript, have it emailed directly to examdocs@cbmt.org.

Note: This transcript does not need to show the degree awarded or the final internship grade.

*If your transcript does not show the degree conferred, CBMT will contact your Program Director for confirmation that all requirements have been successfully completed.

2. Confirmation from your Internship Supervisor(s) can be uploaded in the Exam Application or emailed to examdocs@cbmt.org stating you successfully completed your internship under their supervision.

EQUIVALENCY DEGREE/CERTIFICATE

If you earned an equivalency in music therapy from an AMTA-approved program, submit all of the above. If your undergraduate degree is not printed on your music therapy coursework transcript, send a copy of your undergraduate transcript to examdocs@cbmt.org. This document does not need to be an official transcript and can be scanned and emailed to CBMT, but must show your name, the school name and the degree conferral date.

RE-ENTRY APPLICANTS

If you were previously Board Certified and your certification expired:

1. [Access the LOGIN](#) section on the CBMT website cbmt.org and create and submit an Exam Application. In the application you will need to provide your last board certification number and the date your certification expired. If your name has changed since your certification expired, you will also need to upload a legal name change document.
2. After your application is reviewed, you will be prompted to log in to your CBMT account and pay the examination fee.
3. See [SCHEDULING AN EXAMINATION](#)

Under no circumstances will evidence of another credential be accepted as documentation of eligibility.

ELIGIBILITY REVIEW AND APPEAL POLICY

The CBMT provides the ability for an individual to appeal issues related to certification and recertification eligibility. View our [APPEAL POLICY](#).

STATE LICENSURE

If you are taking the examination for state licensure, please contact the info@cbmt.org for further direction or refer to the cbmt.org for [State Licensure information](#).

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

CBMT and PSI comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and strive to ensure that no individual with a disability (as defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment) is deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of that disability. CBMT and PSI will provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities.

1. Wheelchair access is available at all established Test Centers. Candidates must advise PSI at the time of scheduling that wheelchair access is necessary.
2. Candidates with visual, sensory, physical or learning disabilities that would prevent them from taking the examination under standard conditions may request special accommodations by contacting the CBMT office.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Complete the [REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS](#) form and email to examdocs@cbmt.org.
2. Contact the appropriate professional to complete the [Documentation of Disability-Related Needs](#) form. The provider completing the form must be a qualified professional who is licensed or credentialed to assess and treat the stated disability. Any documentation provided in support of your requested testing accommodation, shall not be dated back more than five (5) years from your accommodation request date. An approved Documentation of Disability-Related Needs form will be valid for 12 months and replaces any previously submitted forms.
 - Your provider must include the disability - code(s), reference the testing completed for diagnosis and why the requested accommodations are needed for testing.
 - The provider must include their contact information, credentials and license number on the form. If the document is missing any of the required items, the form will need to be updated by the provider and sent to the CBMT office again.

Both completed forms must be received and verified at the CBMT office before scheduling an exam appointment. Candidates with approved accommodations will be provided with the instructions to schedule an exam with the accommodations. The CBMT requires 10 working days to process forms.

TEST CENTER LOCATIONS

Detailed maps and directions for the PSI Test Centers are available on the [PSI website](#) and also on the Exam Authorization page when visible in the Exam Application. Specific address information will be provided when you schedule an examination appointment.

EXAMINATION FEES

- New or Re-Entry Candidate \$325
- Re-test \$275

MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND FORFEITURES

You will forfeit your examination registration and all fees paid to take the examination under the following circumstances. A new, complete application and examination fee are required to reapply for examination.

- You cancel your examination after confirmation of eligibility is received.
- You wish to reschedule an examination but fail to contact PSI at least two business days prior to the scheduled testing session.
- You wish to reschedule a second time.
- You appear more than 15 minutes late for an examination.
- You fail to report for an examination appointment.
- You do not present IDs listed on the email confirmation you received from PSI.

INCLEMENT WEATHER, POWER FAILURE OR EMERGENCY

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, PSI will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling, of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the Test Center personnel are able to open the Test Center. You may visit www.psiexams.com/amp/ prior to the examination to determine if PSI has been advised that any Test Centers are closed. Every attempt is made to administer the examination as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at a Test Center, all scheduled candidates will receive notification following the examination regarding rescheduling or reapplication procedures.

If power to a Test Center is temporarily interrupted during an administration, your examination will be restarted. The responses provided up to the point of interruption will be intact, but for security reasons the questions will be scrambled.

EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT CHANGES

1. You may reschedule ONE appointment for examination at no charge by calling PSI at 833.333.4755 at least two business days prior to your scheduled appointment. The following schedule applies.

If your examination is scheduled on...	You must call PSI by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to change your appointment by the previous...
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Monday
Friday/Saturday	Tuesday

2. If you wish to reschedule an examination but fail to contact PSI at least two business days prior to the scheduled appointment, you will forfeit the application and all fees paid to take the examination. A complete application and examination fee are required to reapply for examination.
3. If you cancel your Exam Application after confirmation of eligibility is received, you will forfeit the application and all fees paid to take the examination. A complete application and examination fee are required to reapply for examination.

EXAMINATION CONTENT

The CBMT Examination was developed to objectively measure the knowledge and skills required of music therapists and to foster uniform standards for measuring such knowledge and skills. The examination is based on a content outline developed from a national [practice analysis](#) of music therapy clinical practice which identified tasks that are significant to music therapy practice. Examination questions are written by active Board Certified MT-BC Exam Committee members to assess the knowledge and skills required to perform the identified tasks. The objective examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions (130 scored and 20 non-scored pretest questions).

The non-scored pretest questions will be scattered throughout the examination and you will not be able to discern pretest from scored questions while taking the examination.

You will be expected to respond to all 150 questions in the three hour time limit. You are presented with a question and are asked to choose the correct answer from four options. The summary content outline that follows was developed from the most recent CBMT practice analysis. The number of questions on the examination from each content area is provided with each major content heading.

BOARD CERTIFICATION DOMAINS AND EXAMINATION OUTLINE

Click [here](#) for document.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

The CBMT Examination has been based on a study of tasks required for current music therapy practice. The exam tests various areas of Music Therapy practice and knowledge since Music Therapy is not best delivered by any one sub-specialty, or single approach. By closely reviewing the [Board Certification Domains \(examination outline\)](#) you can identify strengths and weaknesses in your Music Therapy knowledge.

Suggested preparation for the examination might include, but should not be limited to, review of study guides and notes from your academic and clinical training, the study of journal articles, textbooks or other publications reflecting current practice related to the [Board Certification Domains](#). Please visit the [Exam Preparation tab](#) on the [CBMT website](#) for additional suggestions. The CBMT neither sponsors nor endorses review courses or study guides for the CBMT Certification Examination. Examination scores are based on the number of questions correctly answered. You should carefully consider the possible answers to each question and select the best response. It is better to answer every item than to leave any blank.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following are samples of questions that appear in the CBMT Examination.

1. Which of the following sets of notes comprises a pentatonic scale?
 - A. G, A, B, D, E
 - B. E, F#, G#, A#, B
 - C. C, D, E, F#, G#
 - D. D, D#, E, F, F#
2. After six months of treatment to promote a child's language development, the music therapist wishes to determine the effectiveness of music therapy treatment. The therapist should
 - A. repeat the initial assessment to compare results.
 - B. arrange to have a speech/language therapist evaluate the child.
 - C. administer a new evaluation tool specifically designed for this child.
 - D. apply a standardized test to assess current level of language development.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS continued

3. If catharsis is a primary need for a client, the music therapist should use music
- A. that will provide support.
 - B. that will help to sedate the client.
 - C. to enhance altered states of consciousness.
 - D. to evoke the expression of repressed feelings.
4. What is the BEST documentation for the assessment of a client who does not imitate the music therapist in beating rhythmic patterns on a drum?
- A. The client was unable to imitate the therapist in beating rhythmic patterns.
 - B. The client refused to imitate the therapist in beating rhythmic patterns.
 - C. The client did not imitate the therapist in beating rhythmic patterns.
 - D. The client attempted to imitate the therapist in beating rhythmic patterns, but did not succeed.
5. The actions of a therapist's co-worker have repeatedly interfered with the therapeutic process of a client. The therapist's FIRST responsibility is to
- A. ask the client to ignore the co-worker.
 - B. contact the co-worker's supervisor.
 - C. discuss the problem with other co-workers.
 - D. confront the co-worker privately.

ANSWERS	
Content Area	Key
V-5A	A
IV-4A	A
III-3A	D
III-3B	C
V-5B	D



EXAMINATION DAY INSTRUCTIONS

On the day of your examination appointment, report to the Test Center no later than your scheduled testing time. Once you enter the office, look for the sign indicating PSI Test Center Check-In. **IF YOU ARRIVE MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME, YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.**

To gain admission to the Test Center, you must present two forms of identification. The primary form must be government issued, current and include your name, signature and photograph. No form of temporary identification will be accepted. You will also be required to sign a roster for verification of identity.

- Examples of valid primary forms of identification are: driver's license with photograph; state identification card with photograph; passport; military identification card with photograph.
- The secondary form of identification must display your name and signature for signature verification (e.g., credit card with signature, social security card with signature, employment/student ID card with signature).

You are prohibited from misrepresenting your identity or falsifying information to obtain admission to the Test Center. **YOU MUST HAVE PROPER IDENTIFICATION TO GAIN ADMISSION TO THE TEST CENTER.**

At the testing carrel, you will be instructed on-screen to enter your Exam Scheduling number. Your photograph, taken before beginning the examination, will remain on-screen throughout your testing session. This photograph will also print on your score report.

SECURITY

CBMT and PSI maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to ensure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The Test Center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, pagers, mobile phones, smart phones or glasses are allowed in the examination room.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the examination room or reception areas.
- No personal items, valuables, or weapons should be brought to the Test Center. PSI is not responsible for items left in the reception area.

EXAMINATION RESTRICTIONS

- Pencils will be provided during check-in.
- Possession of a cellular/smart phone, wifi-enabled watches or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination.
- You will be provided with one piece of scratch paper at a time to use during the examination. You must return the scratch paper to the supervisor at the completion of the examination, or you will not receive your score report. No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the examination room.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination.
- Eating, drinking or smoking will not be permitted in the Test Center.
- Hats and/or large coats are not allowed in the testing room.
- You may take a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional time to make up for time lost during breaks.

MISCONDUCT

Individuals who engage in any of the following conduct may be dismissed from the examination, their scores will not be reported and examination fees will not be refunded. Examples of misconduct are when a candidate:

- creates a disturbance, is abusive, or otherwise uncooperative;
- displays and/or uses electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular/smart phones;
- talks or participates in conversation with other examination candidates;
- gives or receives help or is suspected of doing so;
- attempts to record examination questions or make notes;
- attempts to take the examination for someone else; or is observed with notes, books or other aids.

Violation of any of the above provisions results in dismissal from the examination session. The candidate's score on the examination is voided and examination fees are not refunded. Evidence of misconduct is reviewed as outlined in the [CBMT Code of Professional Practice](#) to determine whether the candidate will be allowed to reapply for examination. If re-examination is granted, a complete examination and processing fee are required to reapply.

COPYRIGHTED EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

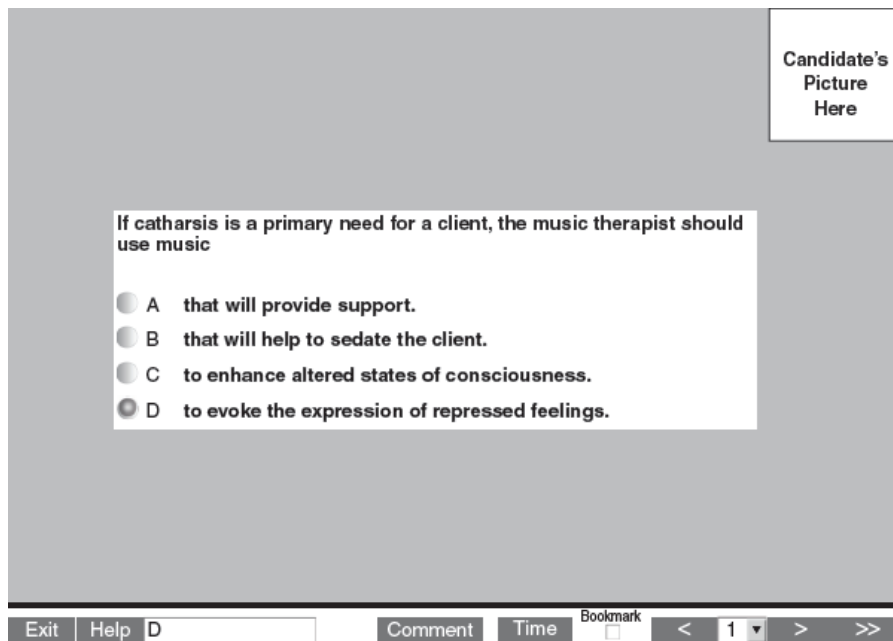
All examination questions are the copyrighted property of CBMT. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

PRACTICE TEST

Prior to attempting the examination, you will be given the opportunity to practice taking an examination on the computer. The time you use for this practice examination is NOT counted as part of your examination time. When you are comfortable with the computer testing process, you may quit the practice session and begin the timed examination.

TIMED EXAMINATION

Following the practice examination, you will begin the timed examination. Before beginning, instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen. The examination contains 150 test questions (130 scored and 20 non-scored pretest questions distributed throughout the examination). Three hours are allotted to complete the examination. The following is a sample of what the computer screen will look like when you are attempting the examination.



The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed three hours. You may click on the "Time" box in the lower right portion of the screen. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination. The time feature may also be turned off during the examination.

Only one question is presented at a time. The question number appears in the lower right portion of the screen. The entire question appears on-screen (i.e., stem and four options labeled – A, B, C and D). **Indicate your choice by either entering the letter of the option you think is correct (A, B, C or D) or clicking on the option using the mouse.** The letter of the selected option appears in the window in the lower left portion of the screen. To change your answer, enter a different option by the mouse. An answer may be changed multiple times.

TIMED EXAMINATION **continued**

To move to the next question, click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right portion of the screen. This action allows the candidate to move forward through the examination question by question. To review a question or questions, click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow key to move backward through the examination.

A question may be left unanswered for return later in the testing session. Questions may also be bookmarked for later review by clicking in the blank square to the right of the Time button. Click on the double arrows (>>) to advance to the next unanswered or bookmarked question on the examination. To identify all unanswered or bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the double arrows (>>). When you have completed the examination, the number of examination questions you answered is reported. If you have not answered all questions and you have time remaining, return to the examination and answer those questions.

You may make comments for any question by clicking on the Comment button to the left of the Time button. This opens a dialogue box where comments may be entered. Comments will be reviewed, but individual responses will not be provided and your test score will not be changed. Be sure to answer each examination question before ending the examination. There is no penalty for guessing.

POST-EXAM PROCEDURES

After you finish the examination, you are asked to complete a short evaluation of your testing experience. Then, you are instructed to report to the Test Center administrator to receive your score report. Scores are reported in printed form only, in person or by U.S. mail. Scores are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail or by facsimile.

Your score report will indicate a “pass” or “fail.” Additional detail is provided in the form of raw scores by major content category. A raw score is the number of questions you answered correctly. Your pass/fail status is determined by whether you answered enough questions correctly to demonstrate the competence level required for entry level practice. Even though the examination consists of 150 questions, your score is based on 130 questions. Twenty questions are “pretest” questions.

The content area scores on your score report are not used to determine pass-fail decision outcomes. They are only provided to offer a general indication regarding your performance in each content area. The examination is designed to provide a consistent and precise determination of your overall performance and is not designed to provide complete information regarding your performance in each content area. You should remember that content areas with a larger number of items (questions) will affect the overall score more than areas with a fewer number of items. The precision and consistency of scores diminishes with fewer items, therefore, the sub-scores should be interpreted with caution, especially those that correspond to content areas with very few items.

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is the Angoff Method, in which expert judges estimate the passing probability of each question on the examination. These ratings are averaged to determine the minimum passing score (i.e., the number of correctly answered questions required to pass the examination.)

EXAMINATION APPEAL POLICY

It is the policy of the CBMT to provide every candidate with an opportunity to question the fairness of the test, its questions and its administration within 30 days of the examination date. View our [APPEAL POLICY](#).

PASSING THE EXAMINATION

If you pass the CBMT Examination, you are allowed to use the credential [“Music Therapist – Board Certified” \(MT – BC\)](#). The CBMT, reserves the right to recognize publicly any candidate who has successfully completed a CBMT Certification Examination, thereby earning the certification credential. MT-BCs have the option to opt-out of being included in the [Certification Directory](#) by emailing info@cbmt.org.

FAILING THE EXAMINATION

There is a 30-day waiting period between exam attempts to encourage candidates to prepare for their next exam; there are no exceptions to this policy. You will be able to create a new Exam Application to re-apply approximately 3 business days after your exam. Log in to your [CBMT](#) account to create and submit a new exam application. After your application is reviewed, you will be prompted to pay the Re-test exam fee when you are ready. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may take the CBMT Examination.

SCORES CANCELED BY THE CBMT OR PSI

The CBMT and PSI are responsible for the integrity of the scores they report. On occasion, occurrences, such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. The CBMT and PSI are committed to rectifying such discrepancies as expeditiously as possible. The CBMT may void examination results if, upon investigation, violation of its regulations is discovered.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about candidates and their examination results are considered confidential; however, the CBMT reserves the right to use information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate in the conduct of research. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

RECERTIFICATION

Earning the Music Therapy Board Certification (MT-BC) credential demonstrates advanced clinical competence. Initial certification or recertification is valid for five years. Certificants maintain certification by accruing 100 recertification credits with 3 credits in ethics, paying annual maintenance fees, submitting the Application for Recertification and participating in the random audit if selected.

Detailed information on Recertification can be found in the [Recertification Manual, 8th edition](#).

Failure To Re-certify: A certificant who fails to meet requirements for recertification is no longer considered certified and may not use the MT-BC credential in online applications or websites such as LinkedIn or in professional communications, such as on letterhead, email address, stationery and business cards, in directory listings and in signature.

REVOCATION OF BOARD CERTIFICATION

Board Certification will be revoked for falsification of an application or application materials, violation of examination procedures or security, or violation of the [CBMT Code of Professional Practice](#). If a certificant is notified of revocation, he/she will also be notified of the appeal process available.

