



State of Utah Social Worker Licensing Board

April 15, 2021

RE: ASWB Exam Use Policy for the State of Utah

To Whom It May Concern,

After many months of careful review and consideration, the Utah Social Worker Licensing Board, in collaboration with the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, announces a change in the social work exam use policy with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) effective after July 1, 2021.

Students in social work who are in their last semester of graduate school will no longer be allowed to take the ASWB exam before finishing their coursework.

The authorization to test for the ASWB Masters exam will be provided by ASWB, once registration is complete, for graduates producing transcripts from a Master of Social Work (MSW) program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, or a doctoral degree that contains a clinical social work concentration and practicum approved by the division.

The authorization to test for the ASWB Clinical exam will provided by ASWB, once registration is complete, for individuals who have an MSW and have obtained two years (4,000 supervised training hours) of experience in a clinical setting as a licensed Certified Social Worker (CSW).

Social work students who received approval to test before June 30, 2021, will still be eligible to take their exam for the duration of their authorization to test.

Recent graduates, who have a degree conferred on their transcripts, can apply for their CSW-Intern license and begin, or continue to work, in the social work profession for six months after graduation. Graduates can take a licensing exam at any time during those six months.

In a letter from ASWB to boards, the primary reason for making the needed changes was: “Enforcing appropriate use of the exams helps maintain the highest psychometric and legally defensible standards on behalf of our members that use the exam(s) as part of their licensing process.”¹ Appropriate use means that members are using the exams according to the purpose of each exam as defined in item 14 of policy 2.1, Procedures.²

¹ <https://www.aswb.org/exam-use-policy-compliance-an-important-update/> (last visited 15 April 2021)

² Attached

The Social Worker Licensing Board recommended compliance with testing guidelines established by ASWB nationally. These guidelines strengthen the defensibility of the social work licensing exams in court, thus protecting the profession's legitimacy and the public welfare. Also, complying with these guidelines will allow for greater license portability across state lines.

We wish to acknowledge the exceptional graduating classes in Utah and the contribution to the profession immediately upon graduation. Utah students often juggle a full-time course load, a practicum, employment, and prepare for and take the exam, all in their last semester, and Utah still has one of the highest pass rates in the nation. We believe this high success rate will continue despite the change. By removing the pressure to take the exam in the last semester, it is the hope of the Board that students will focus more intently on their course work and practicum. This change in focus may reduce burnout, and enable students to transition into employment with even more knowledge and confidence they will need to practice ethically and safely for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Rachel Stoddard, SSW,
Chairperson, Social Worker Licensing Board

Emily Aikins, LCSW
Vice-Chairperson, Social Worker Licensing Board

Marette Monson, LCSW
Member

Alan Misbach, LCSW
Member

Jamie Navarrete, SSW
Member

II. THE EXAMINATION

2.1 PROCEDURES

1. The Association has defined the intended purpose of each examination as follows, and every candidate shall meet the following requirements prior to testing:

Associate. This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue licenses to non-social work–degreed applicants.

Bachelors. This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals with a BSW, upon entry to practice, licenses for basic generalist practice of Baccalaureate Social Work.

Masters. This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals with an MSW, upon entry to practice, licenses for Master’s Social Work practice. The practice of Master’s Social Work includes the application of specialized knowledge and advanced practice skills.

Advanced Generalist. This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals who have an MSW and two years (or commensurate experience as defined by the jurisdiction) of experience in non-clinical settings, licenses for Advanced Generalist social work practice. Advanced Generalist social work occurs in nonclinical settings that may include macro-level practice.

Clinical. This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals who have an MSW and two years (or commensurate experience as defined by the jurisdiction) of experience in clinical settings, licenses for the practice of Clinical Social Work. The practice of Clinical Social Work requires the application of specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills.

To ensure the legal defensibility of examination results, the Association reserves the right to allow access to and use of any ASWB examination only for the purpose(s) for which it is intended and as set forth in contractual agreements between the Association and its Member Boards. The Association’s support of the legal defensibility of its examinations is limited to use consistent with these policies and with the current practice analysis. Any member desiring to use the exam outside of this policy must apply for a waiver using a procedure approved by the ASWB Board of Directors.