

**BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES REGULATORY BOARD  
SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

Due to COVID-19, the Board office is practicing social distancing. The office space does not allow for a meeting while practicing social distancing, therefore, the meeting will be conducted virtually on the Zoom platform. The Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board may take items out of order as necessary to accommodate the time restrictions of Board members and visitors. All times and items are subject to change

You may view the meeting here: [https://youtu.be/vtCju7\\_3R7U](https://youtu.be/vtCju7_3R7U)

To join the meeting by conference call: **877-278-8686 (Pin: 327072)**

If there are any technical issues during the meeting, you may call the Board office at, 785-296-3240.

**Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

**1:00 p.m. - Call to order and Roll Call**

- I. Opening Remarks, Advisory Committee Chair**
- II. Agenda Approval**
- III. Review and Approval of Minutes for Previous Meeting on April 19, 2022**
- IV. Executive Director's Report**
- V. Old Business**
  - a. Continued Discussion on Unprofessional Conduct Regulations**
    - i. Discussion of "Supervisor" (Clinical, Employment, or Other)**
  - b. Continuing Education Requirements in the Areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**
    - i. Possible Recommendation to the Board**
  - c. Proactive Approaches to Public Protection**
    - i. Associate Social Worker License**
  - d. Discussion on Workforce Issues**
  - e. Discussion on Clinical Supervision**
    - i. Possible Recommendation on Training**
    - ii. Possible Recommendation on Board-Approved Supervisor Status**
- VI. New Business**
  - a. Implementation of SB 453 – Regulatory Language Considerations for LSCSW Applicants with no Clinical Practicum**
  - b. Temporary Licenses for Graduates of Programs in Candidacy for CSWE Accreditation**
  - c. "In Residence" Requirement for Licensure**
  - d. Social Work Compact**
- VII. Committee Discussion on Items for Next Meeting**

**VIII. Special Recognition of Carolyn Szafran**

**IX. Information on New Social Work Board Member**

**X. Next Meetings: Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022; Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2022; and Tuesday, Dec. 20**

**XI. Adjournment**

**Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board  
Social Work Advisory Committee  
April 19, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.  
DRAFT Minutes**

- I. Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Andrea Perdomo-Morales at 1:00 p.m.

**Social Work Advisory Committee Members.** Advisory Committee members present over Zoom included Andrea Perdomo-Morales, Carolyn Szafran, Donna Hoener-Queal, Sarah Berens, Mary Gill, Mike Gillett, Lee Ann Gingery, Angi Heller-Workman, Jane Holzrichter, Catherine Rech, Eric Schoenecker, Cristin Stice, and Robin Unruh.

**BSRB Staff.** Staff members present over Zoom included David Fye, Leslie Allen, and Sami Barksdale.

- II. Agenda Approval.** Eric Schoenecker moved to approve the agenda as written. Carolyn Szafran seconded. The motion passed.
- III. Minutes Approval.** Donna Hoener-Queal moved to approve the minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting on February 15, 2022. Jane Holzrichter seconded. The motion passed.
- IV. Executive Director's Report.** David Fye, Executive Director for the BSRB, reported on the following topics:
- A. BSRB Staff Update.** The BSRB is still under most of the Governor's pandemic directions, including the limitation on in-person meetings, so the agency is unable to hold Board or Advisory Committee meetings in person currently. Most staff are working in the office full-time, though the two investigators are using a telework hybrid model, working in the office three days each week and utilizing the BSRB Telework Pilot two days each week.
- B. 2022 Legislative Session.** The Executive Director provided a brief summary of the legislative process to enact a bill, including legislative deadlines. The Legislature is currently on a three-week break, before returning and wrapping up most items during the legislative Omnibus period. The appropriations bill (House Substitute for Substitute for Senate Bill (SB) 267) was passed by the Legislature and is pending review and action by the Governor. The Executive Director provided a summary of legislative action on the Board's recommendations, beginning with the introduction of SB 387, the hearing and Senate Committee discussion on that bill, Amended SB 387 being passed out of the Senate Committee after the Senate Committee voted to remove the licensed psychology Board recommendation, SB 387 dying on the Senate calendar, follow up efforts to have Amended SB 387 reintroduced, heard, and worked in a House Committee, and the activities in Legislative conference committees. Ultimately, two Board recommendations were passed in the final version of SB 453.

The final bill included Board recommendations for the addiction counselor profession and the social work profession, but not the Board's recommendation concerning continuing education changes for the Licensed Psychology profession. Another bill relevant to the BSRB is House Bill (HB) 2087, which was passed with the previous contents of Substitute for SB 34. HB 2087 requires all agencies to submit a report to the Joint Committee on Rules and Regulations, for all agency regulations, explaining if each regulation is necessary for the implementation of state law. There are over 120 regulations for the BSRB, so creation of this report will necessitate the agency diverting staff time from regular duties and will likely cause licensing delays or lead the agency to hire additional part-time staff.

- C. March Board Meeting.** The Executive Director provided updates from the Board meeting on March 14, 2022. Most full Board meetings will begin at 9am, at least while meetings are held remotely. The Board is reviewing the Investigation Policy for the Board, which was last updated in 2009. The Executive Director will be presenting a report to the Board with proposed changes to the Policy at the May Board meeting. Certain statutes and regulations state authority for actions as "the Board," but some of these tasks have been delegated over the years to the BSRB, the Executive Director, the Complaint Review Committee, etc. The Executive Director noted he will bring sections of statutes and regulations before the Board to clarify delegation authority and possibly have the Board vote to renew some of these delegations. The Board discussed Board-approved supervisor training and if there are adequate opportunities for supervisor trainings. In future meetings, the Board intends to discuss impaired provider programs, telehealth standards, and other topics.
- D. April Board Meeting.** On April 15, 2022, a special Board meeting was held for the Board to discuss language added and passed by the Legislature in SB 453, concerning graduates of an online Master's of Social Work program at Fort Hays State University. This program is in candidacy for accreditation through the national accrediting body for social work, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), but does not expect to reach full accreditation until February 2023. Under the licensure statutes and regulations of the BSRB, if applicants obtained their education from schools not accredited by CSWE, then those applicants alternatively must meet separate requirements in the regulations. One such regulation requires half of the coursework to be completed "in residence," while the applicant was physically present at the school. Graduates of an online program would not be able to meet this standard. The language added by the Legislature directed the BSRB to treat graduates from this online Fort Hays State program as if they had graduated from a CSWE accredited school, for the purpose of fulfilling licensure requirements (retroactively for past graduates and for future graduates through the end of FY 2023). The Board expressed interest in re-examining licensure requirement which require a physical presence while obtaining coursework and also the creation of a new provisional/temporary license for applicants who graduated from a school while their program is in candidacy for CSWE accreditation.

- E. Conferences.** The Executive Director will be attending upcoming conferences for the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) and the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) later this month and will provide a report on any items relevant to the Advisory Committee.

## **V. Old Business**

**A. Discussion on Clinical Supervision, Workforce Issues, and Possible Continuing Education Requirements in the Areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).**

Advisory Committee members requested old business topics be separated in future agendas, rather than being grouped together. Advisory Committee members discussed the BSRB survey of social workers in December 2021 and summarized past Advisory Committee discussion on continuing education involving DEI. Concerning workforce concerns, the Executive Director noted the BSRB previously licensed new Associate Level Social Workers. Over the years, most of these licensees have retired, but a small number continue to renew their license. Leslie Allen, the Assistant Director and Licensing Manager for the BSRB, noted the statutory authority to license new individuals at this level was removed by the Legislature, so it would require passages of a bill to license new members of this group. Advisory Committee members asked whether other jurisdictions licensed social workers at this level and the requirements for those licenses. The Executive Director noted he would gather more information on these topics. Advisory Committee discussed whether reopening this level of licensure would lead to lower licensure standards and whether this would run contrary to the public-protection mission of the Board. Advisory Committee members also discussed whether reopening the associate-level license would lead individuals to stop at this level, or whether it would be stepping stool for more individuals to pursue a higher level of license. Advisory Committee members discussed reviewing the current licensure requirements, specifically including the “in residence” requirement for students attending non-CSWE accredited programs. Advisory Committees asked whether there is a regulation under the BSRB that lists what level of licensure is needed by individuals working in different types of facilities. The Assistant Director and Licensing Manager noted the BSRB does not have a regulation on this topic, but that type of evaluation is generally done by facilities employing social workers. The Advisory Committee noted it intends to work on each of the topics listed under old business at future meetings, focusing first on workforce issues.

## **VI. New Business**

- A. Advisory Committee Member Expectations for FY 2023.** The Executive Director summarized information in the Expectations for Board Members Policy and the Advisory Committee Policy as related to responsibilities of Advisory Committee members for the next fiscal year, including conduct of Advisory Committee members, attendance at meetings, and other responsibilities. If members are unable to attend meetings, they are asked to contact the Executive Director in advance of these meetings and to limit unexcused absences to no more than one each year.

**B. Unprofessional Conduct Regulation.** Advisory Committee members received a copy of the unprofessional conduct regulations for the profession (K.A.R. 102-2-7) at the previous Advisory Committee meeting and were asked to discuss whether any changes were needed. Members of the Advisory Committee discussed the following subjects:

- Advisory Committee members noted the current unprofessional conduct regulations lack language concerning appropriate technology related to telehealth practice. Members expressed support for adding language on e-mail, texting, and compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for televideo services. Members noted there are highlighted changes to the code of ethics on this topic, so that information will be forwarded to Advisory Committee members;
- Advisory Committee members noted difficulty reviewing the unprofessional conduct regulations, though the Executive Director noted the agency is bound to the legislative formatting style. The Executive Director noted other Advisory Committees expressed a similar concern, so the BSRB will be looking to see if the agency can create a more user-friendly version of the regulations in the future;
- Advisory Committee members expressed support for updating terminology in K.A.R 102-2-7(l), noting that the items in regulation do not match the list recognized in the code of ethics; and
- Advisory Committee members noted the lack of substantial language on practitioner self-care.
- Advisory Committee members were asked to continue reviewing the unprofessional conduct regulations for further discussion at the next meeting.

**C. Proactive Discussion to Public Protection.** The Executive Director noted the public protection mission of the BSRB and that a significant amount of work by the agency is reactionary. The agency would like to take a more proactive approach and the Executive Director and Assistant Director have been speaking to students about licensure and unprofessional conduct to educate students on issues prior to those individuals becoming licensed. Advisory Committee member noted that possible proactive approaches could include providing more visibility to restrictions on the use of the term “social worker” and the possibility of creating instructional videos on statutes, regulations, or scenarios of certain conduct. The Executive Director asked Advisory Committee members to review materials on the BSRB website and to report back additional suggestions at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

**VII. Future Meetings in 2022:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022; Tuesday, August 16, 2022; Tuesday, October 18, 2022; and Tuesday, December 20, 2022.

**VIII. Adjournment.** Lee Gingery moved to adjourn the meeting. Carolyn Szafran seconded. The motion passed.

**102-2-7. Unprofessional conduct.** Any of the following acts by a licensee or an applicant for a social work license shall constitute unprofessional conduct:

- (a) Obtaining or attempting to obtain a license for oneself or another by means of fraud, bribery, deceit, misrepresentation, or concealment of a material fact;
- (b) except when the information has been obtained in the context of a confidential relationship, failing to notify the board, within a reasonable period of time, that any of the following conditions apply to any person regulated by the board or applying for a license or registration, including oneself:
  - (1) Had a professional license, certificate, permit, registration, certification, or professional membership granted by any jurisdiction, professional association, or professional organization that has been limited, conditioned, qualified, restricted, suspended, revoked, refused, voluntarily surrendered, or allowed to expire in lieu of or during investigatory or disciplinary proceedings;
  - (2) has been subject to any other disciplinary action by any credentialing board, professional association, or professional organization;
  - (3) has been demoted, terminated, suspended, reassigned, or asked to resign from employment, or has resigned from employment, for some form of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance;
  - (4) has been convicted of a felony; or
  - (5) has practiced the licensee's or registrant's profession in violation of the laws or regulations regulating the profession;
- (c) knowingly allowing another individual to use one's license;
- (d) impersonating another individual holding a license or registration issued by this or any other board;
- (e) having been convicted of a crime resulting from or relating to the licensee's professional practice of social work;
- (f) furthering the licensure or registration application of another person who is known to be unqualified with respect to character, education, or other relevant eligibility requirements;
- (g) knowingly aiding or abetting anyone who is not credentialed by the board to represent that individual as a person who is credentialed by the board;
- (h) failing to recognize, seek intervention, and otherwise appropriately respond when one's own personal problems, psychosocial distress, or mental health difficulties interfere with or negatively impact professional judgment, professional performance and functioning, or the ability to act in the client's best interests;
- (i) failing or refusing to cooperate in a timely manner with any request from the board for a response, information that is not obtained in the context of a confidential relationship, or assistance with respect to the board's investigation of any report of an alleged violation filed against oneself or any other applicant or professional who is required to be licensed or registered by the board. Each person taking longer than 30 days to provide the requested response, information, or assistance shall have the burden of demonstrating that the person acted in a timely manner;
- (j) offering to perform or performing services clearly inconsistent or incommensurate with one's training, education, and experience and with accepted professional standards for social work;
- (k) treating any client, student, or supervisee in a cruel manner;

- (l) discriminating against any client, student, or supervisee on the basis of color, race, gender, religion, national origin, or disability;
- (m) failing to advise and explain to each client the respective rights, responsibilities, and duties involved in the social work relationship;
- (n) failing to provide each client with a description of what the client can expect in the way of services, consultation, reports, fees, billing, therapeutic regimen, or schedule, or failing to reasonably comply with these descriptions;
- (o) failing to provide each client with a description of the possible effects of the proposed treatment when there are clear and known risks to the client;
- (p) failing to inform each client or supervisee of any financial interests that might accrue to the licensee from referral to any other service or from the use of any tests, books, or apparatus;
- (q) failing to inform each client that the client is entitled to the same services from a public agency if the licensee is employed by that public agency and also offers services privately;
- (r) failing to inform each client, supervisee, or student of the limits of client confidentiality, the purposes for which information is obtained, and the manner in which the information may be used;
- (s) revealing information, a confidence, or secret of any client, or failing to protect the confidences, secrets, or information contained in a client's records, except when at least one of these conditions is met:
  - (1) Disclosure is required or permitted by law;
  - (2) failure to disclose the information presents a clear and present danger to the health or safety of an individual or the public; or
  - (3) the licensee is a party to a civil, criminal, or disciplinary investigation or action arising from the practice of social work, in which case disclosure is limited to that action;
- (t) failing to obtain written, informed consent from each client, or the client's legal representative or representatives, before performing any of these actions:
  - (1) Electronically recording sessions with that client;
  - (2) permitting a third-party observation of their activities; or
  - (3) releasing information concerning a client to a third party, except as required or permitted by law;
- (u) failing to protect the confidences of, secrets of, or information concerning other persons when providing a client with access to that client's records;
- (v) failing to exercise due diligence in protecting information regarding and the confidences and secrets of the client from disclosure by other persons in one's work or practice setting;
- (w) engaging in professional activities, including billing practices and advertising, involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation;
- (x) using alcohol or illegally using any controlled substance while performing the duties or services of a licensee;
- (y) making sexual advances toward or engaging in physical intimacies or sexual activities with one's client, supervisee, or student;
- (z) making sexual advances toward, engaging in physical intimacies or sexual activities with, or exercising undue influence over any person who, within the past 24 months, has been one's client;

- (aa) exercising undue influence over any client, supervisee, or student, including promoting sales of services or goods, in a manner that will exploit the client, supervisee, or student for the financial gain, personal gratification, or advantage of oneself or a third party;
- (bb) directly or indirectly offering or giving to a third party or soliciting, receiving, or agreeing to receive from a third party any fee or other consideration for the referral of the client or patient or in connection with the performance of professional services;
- (cc) permitting any person to share in the fees for professional services, other than a partner, employee, an associate in a professional firm, or a consultant authorized to practice social work;
- (dd) soliciting or assuming professional responsibility for clients of another agency or colleague without informing and attempting to coordinate continuity of client services with that agency or colleague;
- (ee) making claims of professional superiority that one cannot substantiate;
- (ff) guaranteeing that satisfaction or a cure will result from the performance of professional services;
- (gg) claiming or using any secret or special method of treatment or techniques that one refuses to divulge to the board;
- (hh) continuing or ordering tests, procedures, or treatments or using treatment facilities or services not warranted by the condition, best interests, or preferences of the client;
- (ii) if the social worker is the owner of the records, failing to maintain for each client a record that conforms to the following minimal standards:
  - (1) Contains adequate identification of the client;
  - (2) indicates the client's initial reason for seeking the licensee's services;
  - (3) contains pertinent and significant information concerning the client's condition;
  - (4) summarizes the intervention, treatment, tests, procedures, and services that were obtained, performed, ordered, or recommended and the findings and results of each;
  - (5) documents the client's progress during the course of intervention or treatment provided by the licensee;
  - (6) is legible;
  - (7) contains only those terms and abbreviations that are comprehensible to similar professional practitioners;
  - (8) indicates the date and nature of any professional service that was provided; and
  - (9) describes the manner and process by which the professional relationship terminated;
- (jj) taking credit for work not performed personally, whether by giving inaccurate or misleading information or by failing to disclose accurate or material information;
- (kk) if engaged in research, failing to fulfill these requirements:
  - (1) Consider carefully the possible consequences for human beings participating in the research;
  - (2) protect each participant from unwarranted physical and mental harm;
  - (3) ascertain that the consent of each participant is voluntary and informed; and
  - (4) preserve the privacy and protect the anonymity of each subject of the research within the terms of informed consent;
- (ll) making or filing a report that one knows to be distorted, erroneous, incomplete, or misleading;
- (mm) failing to notify the client promptly when termination or interruption of service to

the client is anticipated;

(nn) failing to seek continuation of service, or abandoning or neglecting a client under or in need of professional care, without making reasonable arrangements for that care;

(oo) abandoning employment under circumstances that seriously impair the delivery of professional care to clients and without providing reasonable notice to the employer;

(pp) failing to terminate the social work services when it is apparent that the relationship no longer serves the client's needs or best interests;

(qq) if the licensee is the owner or custodian of client records, failing to retain those records for at least two years after the date of termination of the professional relationship, unless otherwise provided by law;

(rr) failing to exercise adequate supervision over anyone with whom the licensee has a supervisory or directory relationship;

(ss) failing to inform a client if social work services are provided or delivered under supervision or direction;

(tt) engaging in a dual relationship with a client, supervisee, or student;

(uu) failing to inform the proper authorities in accordance with K.S.A. 38-2223, and amendments thereto, that one knows or has reason to believe that a client has been involved in harming or has harmed a child, whether by physical, mental, or emotional abuse or neglect or by sexual abuse;

(vv) failing to inform the proper authorities in accordance with K.S.A. 39-1402, and amendments thereto, that one knows or has reason to believe that any of the following circumstances apply to a resident, as defined by K.S.A. 39-1401 and amendments thereto:

(1) Has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited;

(2) is in a condition that is the result of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; or

(3) is in need of protective services;

(ww) failing to inform the proper authorities in accordance with K.S.A. 39-1431, and amendments thereto, that one knows or has reason to believe that any of the following circumstances apply to an adult, as defined in K.S.A. 39-1430 and amendments thereto:

(1) Is being or has been abused, neglected, or exploited;

(2) is in a condition that is the result of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; or

(3) is in need of protective services;

(xx) practicing social work in an incompetent manner;

(yy) practicing social work after one's license expires;

(zz) using without a license, or continuing to use after the expiration of a license, any title or abbreviation prescribed by the board for use only by persons currently holding that type or class of license;

(aaa) violating any provision of K.S.A. 65-6301 et seq., and amendments thereto, or any regulation adopted under that act;

(bbb) except as permitted by K.S.A. 65-6319 and amendments thereto, providing or offering to provide direction or supervision over individuals performing diagnoses and treatment of mental disorders;

(ccc) except as permitted by K.S.A. 65-6306 and K.S.A. 65-6319 and amendments thereto, engaging in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders; or

(ddd) engaging in independent private practice if not authorized by law.

(Authorized by and implementing K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 65-6311 and K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 74-7507; effective May 1, 1982; amended, T-85-36, Dec. 19, 1984; amended May 1, 1985; amended, T-86-39, Dec. 11, 1985;

amended May 1, 1986; amended May 1, 1987; amended May 1, 1988; amended Feb. 25, 1991; amended Aug. 4, 2000; amended Jan. 9, 2004; amended Dec. 19, 2008.)

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# Highlighted Revisions to the Code of Ethics

On February 19, 2021, and November 6, 2020, the NASW Delegate Assembly approved the following revisions to the NASW Code of Ethics.

## 2021 Highlights

### **Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics**

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical

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principles, and ethical standards, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.

6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's

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ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, "technology-assisted social work services" include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation;

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education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers' self-care.

## Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

### **Value:** *Service*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

### **Value:** *Social Justice*

**Ethical Principle:** Social workers challenge social injustice. Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

### **Value:** *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader

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society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

**Value:** *Importance of Human Relationships*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**Value:** *Integrity*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value:** *Competence*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

## Ethical Standards

### 1.05 Cultural Competence

(a) Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must take action against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.

(c) Social workers should demonstrate awareness and cultural humility by engaging in critical self-reflection (understanding their own bias and engaging in self-correction); recognizing clients as experts of their own culture; committing to life-long learning; and holding institutions accountable for advancing cultural humility.

(d) Social workers should obtain education about and demonstrate understanding of the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(e) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients' use of and access to electronic technology and seek to prevent such potential barriers. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

## 2017 Highlights

On August 4, 2017, the NASW Delegate Assembly approved the most substantive revisions to the NASW Code of Ethics since 1996. After careful and charged deliberation, the Delegate Assembly voted to accept proposed revisions to the Code that focused largely on the use of technology and the implications for ethical practice.

### Preamble

### Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

### Ethical Principles

### Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

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# 1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

## 1.01 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

## 1.02 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

## 1.03 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients the social workers' policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.

(f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed

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consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

(g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients' intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and the clients' ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.

(h) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of them or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

(i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

### **1.04 Competence**

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

(d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.

(e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

### **1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity**

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society,

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recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(d) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

### **1.06 Conflicts of Interest**

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties

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involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

(g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.

(h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

### **1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality**

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with

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clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

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- (n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.
  - (o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.
  - (p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.
  - (q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.
  - (r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.
  - (s) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with applicable laws governing records and social work licensure.
  - (t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
  - (u) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.
  - (v) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.
  - (w) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

### **1.08 Access to Records**

- (a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.

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(b) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.

(c) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

### **1.09 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

### **1.10 Physical Contact**

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

### **1.11 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical

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contact of a sexual nature.

### **1.12 Derogatory Language**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

### **1.13 Payment for Services**

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.

(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

### **1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity**

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

### **1.15 Interruption of Services**

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

### **1.16 Referral for Services**

(a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that other services are required.

(b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other

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professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

### **1.17 Termination of Services**

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

## **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**

### **2.01 Respect**

(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental

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or physical ability.

(c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

## **2.02 Confidentiality**

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

## **2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

(a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

## **2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.

(b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

## **2.05 Consultation**

(a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.

(b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

## **2.06 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact (including verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact) with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming

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involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

## **2.07 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances; sexual solicitation; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

## **2.08 Impairment of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

## **2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

## **2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.

(b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take

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action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

### **3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings**

#### **3.01 Supervision and Consultation**

(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely) should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.

(d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

#### **3.02 Education and Training**

(a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

#### **3.03 Performance Evaluation**

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

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### **3.04 Client Records**

- (a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in electronic and paper records is accurate and reflects the services provided.
- (b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.
- (c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.
- (d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

### **3.05 Billing**

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

### **3.06 Client Transfer**

- (a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.
- (b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

### **3.07 Administration**

- (a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.
- (b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- (c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.
- (d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with

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the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

### **3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development**

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

### **3.09 Commitments to Employers**

- (a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
- (b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.
- (c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.
- (d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- (e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- (f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.
- (g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

### **3.10 Labor-Management Disputes**

- (a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.
- (b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action.

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Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

## **4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals**

### **4.01 Competence**

(a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

(b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

### **4.02 Discrimination**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

### **4.03 Private Conduct**

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

### **4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception**

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

### **4.05 Impairment**

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other

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steps necessary to protect clients and others.

#### **4.06 Misrepresentation**

(a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.

(b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

#### **4.07 Solicitations**

(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

#### **4.08 Acknowledging Credit**

(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

### **5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession**

#### **5.01 Integrity of the Profession**

(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

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- (c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.
  - (d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.
  - (e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

## **5.02 Evaluation and Research**

- (a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.
- (b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.
- (c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.
- (d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.
- (e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- (f) When using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.
- (g) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- (h) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research,

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unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(i) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(j) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(k) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

(l) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.

(m) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.

(n) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

(o) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.

(p) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.

(q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

## **6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society**

### **6.01 Social Welfare**

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

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### **6.02 Public Participation**

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

### **6.03 Public Emergencies**

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

### **6.04 Social and Political Action**

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.



## **About the 2021 Revisions**

- 2021 Revisions to the NASW Code of Ethics: Self-Care and Cultural Competence
- Frequently Asked Questions about the 2021 NASW Code of Ethics

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## Read the Code of Ethics

- Read the Code of Ethics online
- Buy a hard copy at NASW Press

**102-2-12. Licensed specialist clinical social work licensure requirements.**

(a) Educational requirements. In order for an applicant who earns a degree before July 1, 2003 to qualify for licensure as a licensed specialist clinical social worker, the applicant shall meet, as a part of or in addition to the educational requirements provided in K.S.A. 65-6306, and amendments thereto, the following educational requirements:

- (1) Satisfactory completion of at least three graduate academic hours in a discrete academic course whose primary and explicit focus is upon psychopathology and the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders classified in the diagnostic manuals commonly used as a part of accepted social work practice;
- (2) satisfactory completion of a graduate-level, clinically oriented social work practicum that fulfills these requirements:
  - (A) Is taken after completion of the graduate-level, clinically focused academic courses that are prerequisite to entering the clinical practicum;
  - (B) is an integrated, conceptually organized academic experience and is not an after-the-fact tabulation of clinical experience;
  - (C) occurs in a practice setting that, by its nature and function, clearly supports clinical social work practice and consistently provides opportunities for the supervised application of clinical social work practice knowledge, skills, values, and ethics; and
  - (D) provides training and close supervision in a wide range of clinical social work practice activities with a population of clients presenting a diverse set of problems and backgrounds.

(b) Each applicant for licensure as a specialist clinical social worker who earns a degree on or after July 1, 2003 shall meet the following requirements:

- (1) Satisfactory completion of 15 graduate-level credit hours supporting diagnosis or treatment of mental disorders using the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders as specified in K.A.R. 102-2-14. Three of the 15 credit hours shall consist of a discrete academic course whose primary and explicit focus is upon psychopathology and the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders as classified in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. The 15 graduate-level credit hours shall be from a social work program accredited by the council on social work education or a social work program in substantial compliance as prescribed in K.A.R. 102-2-6 and approved by the board; and

(2) completion of one of the following experience requirements:

- (A) A graduate-level, supervised clinical practicum of professional experience that includes psychotherapy and assessment. The practicum shall integrate diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders as identified in K.A.R. 102-2-14 and shall include not less than 350 hours of direct client contact; or

(B) postgraduate supervised experience including psychotherapy and assessment. The experience shall integrate diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, as specified in K.A.R. 102-2-14. The experience shall consist of not less than 700 hours of supervised experience, including not less than 350 hours of direct client contact. This experience shall be in addition to the 4,000 hours of postgraduate, supervised experience required for each licensed specialist clinical social worker, as specified in subsection (c). The applicant shall provide documentation of this postgraduate experience on board-approved forms.

The supervision shall comply with K.A.R. 102-2-8 and K.A.R. 102-2-12(c) and shall be in addition to the supervision requirements in K.A.R. 102-2-12(c)(4).

(c) Each applicant for licensure as a specialist clinical social worker shall fulfill the following requirements:

(1) Develop and co-sign with the supervisor a clinical supervision training plan for the postgraduate supervised clinical experience required under K.S.A. 65-6306 and amendments thereto, on forms provided by the board. The applicant shall submit this plan to the board for consideration for approval before beginning clinical supervision. The clinical supervision training plan shall comply with K.A.R. 102-2-8. If changes or amendments to the plan occur after initial board approval, these changes or amendments shall be submitted to the board for consideration for approval;

(2) complete, in not less than two years and not more than six years, a minimum of 4,000 hours of satisfactorily evaluated postgraduate, supervised clinical social work practice experience under the supervision of a qualified licensed specialist clinical social worker. A minimum of 2,000 hours of the applicant's total postgraduate, supervised clinical experience shall consist of a combination of the following types of social work services:

(A) At least 1,500 hours of direct client contact conducting psychotherapy and assessments with individuals, couples, families, or groups; and

(B) up to 500 hours of providing clinical social work practice services;

(3) complete all required practice under supervision in accordance with K.A.R. 102-2-8; and

(4) participate in a minimum of 100 supervisory meetings consisting of not less than 150 hours of clinical supervision. A minimum of 75 hours of the 150 required hours of supervision shall be individual supervision, of which at least 50 hours shall be obtained in person. The remainder of the 150 required hours may be obtained in person or, if confidentiality is technologically protected, by videoconferencing. Each applicant using videoconferencing shall provide written verification of the technological security measure implemented. The supervision shall integrate the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with the use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders specified in K.A.R. 102-2-14. A maximum of two hours of supervision shall be counted for each 20 hours of clinical social work practice.

(d) At the time of the individual's application for licensure as a specialist clinical social worker, the applicant's supervisor shall submit documentation that is satisfactory to the board and that enables the board to evaluate the nature, quality, and quantity of the applicant's supervised clinical social work experience. This documentation shall include the following information:

(1) A written summary of the types of clients and situations dealt with during the supervisory sessions;

(2) a written summary that addresses the degree to which the goals and objectives of supervision have been met;

(3) a written statement and supportive documentation that describes the applicant's practice setting and provides a summary of the applicant's practice activities and responsibilities that occurred while under supervision;

(4) a statement indicating whether or not the applicant merits the public trust; and

(5) an evaluation of the applicant's supervised clinical social work experience.

(Authorized by K.S.A. 65-6306, K.S.A. 65-6308, and K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 74-7507; implementing K.S.A. 65-6306 and K.S.A. 65-6308; effective, T- 85-36, Dec. 19, 1984; effective May 1, 1985; amended May 1,

1987; amended Feb. 25, 1991; amended Oct. 24, 1997; amended Aug. 4, 2000; amended July 7, 2003; amended April 22, 2005; amended Feb. 13, 2009.)

### Select Text From K.A.R. 102-2-12. Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Work Licensure Requirements

The current K.A.R. 102-2-12 (in the process of being struck due to passage of 2021 HB 2208) is included below:

(b) Each applicant for licensure as a specialist clinical social worker who earns a degree on or after July 1, 2003 shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Satisfactory completion of 15 graduate-level credit hours supporting diagnosis or treatment of mental disorders using the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders as specified in K.A.R. 102-2-14. Three of the 15 credit hours shall consist of a discrete academic course whose primary and explicit focus is upon psychopathology and the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders as classified in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. The 15 graduate-level credit hours shall be from a social work program accredited by the council on social work education or a social work program in substantial compliance as prescribed in K.A.R. 102-2-6 and approved by the board; and

(2) completion of one of the following experience requirements:

(A) A graduate-level, supervised clinical practicum of professional experience that includes psychotherapy and assessment. The practicum shall integrate diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders as identified in K.A.R. 102-2-14 and shall include not less than 350 hours of direct client contact; or

(B) postgraduate supervised experience including psychotherapy and assessment. The experience shall integrate diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders with use of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, as specified in K.A.R. 102-2-14. The experience shall consist of not less than 700 hours of supervised experience, including not less than 350 hours of direct client contact. This experience shall be in addition to the 4,000 hours of postgraduate, supervised experience required for each licensed specialist clinical social worker, as specified in subsection (c). The applicant shall provide documentation of this postgraduate experience on board-approved forms. The supervision shall comply with K.A.R. 102-2-8 and K.A.R. 102-2-12(c) and shall be in addition to the supervision requirements in K.A.R. 102-2-12(c)(4).

# Minnesota Temporary License Option for Students Graduating from Programs in Candidacy for CSWE Accreditation

## Apply for Temporary License

If you qualify for one of three specific provisions, a temporary license allows you to begin authorized social work practice for a time-limited period, and can typically be issued more quickly than a permanent license. If you will start a social work position in Minnesota before your permanent license is issued, or do not plan to obtain a permanent Minnesota license, apply for a temporary license to avoid unlicensed practice.

There are three temporary licenses under [Minnesota Statutes section 148E.060](#). Temporary licenses are issued as either baccalaureate (if you are applying for permanent LSW and/or have a bachelor's degree) or masters (if you are applying for permanent LGSW, LISW, or LICSW and/or have a master's degree). Review temporary licenses and requirements on each tab below to determine if you are eligible.

1. **Students** or persons not currently licensed in another jurisdiction
2. Persons **currently licensed in another jurisdiction**
3. **Students** graduating from programs in Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) **candidacy status**

## Candidacy Students

Available to students who are graduating from a social work degree program in candidacy status (programs working toward CSWE accreditation).

## Eligibility Requirements

- **Permanent License Application:** Submitted an application for permanent licensure (LSW or LGSW)
- **Academic Degree:** Completed all requirements for a baccalaureate or graduate degree in social work from a program currently in candidacy status with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work
- **Examination:** Obtained a passing score on the applicable Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam
- **Criminal Background Check:** Submitted required fees and documentation for a criminal background check (CBC) under Minnesota Statutes section 214.075 (*CBC fee is submitted with application for permanent license*)
- **Ethical Standards:** Must not have engaged in conduct in violation of the Board's ethical standards of practice

## Time Limit/Expiration

- Valid for 12 months
- Not renewable but may be extended if the social work program remains in candidacy status

- Expiration date is the last day of the month 12 months from the effective date, or when a permanent license is issued, whichever is earlier

### **Supervised Practice Requirements**

Licensing supervision is required for practice under a temporary license issued to a student or unlicensed person:

- Review [supervised practice requirements](#)
- Submit a Supervision Plan within 60 days of beginning a social work position
- Supervised practice completed with a temporary license will apply to permanent license requirements

### **Authorized Scope of Practice:**

- **Baccalaureate temporary license:** Authorizes the practice of social work but does not authorize clinical social work practice
- **Graduate temporary license:** Authorizes both the practice of social work and clinical social work practice

### **Representation:**

- **Baccalaureate temporary license:** Must represent as a “temporary license baccalaureate social worker”
- **Graduate temporary license:** Must represent as a “temporary license graduate social worker”
- Do not use the credentials LSW or LGSW until a permanent license is issued

*\*Continuing Education (CE) is not required for temporary licenses, but CE obtained with a temporary license may be applied to permanent license requirements.*

### **Attention BSW and MSW Students—Apply at the Right Time!**

- A temporary license can only be approved if you have completed all degree requirements and obtained a passing score on the required ASWB exam
- If you have applied for permanent license, passed the ASWB, and submitted fingerprints, you may apply for temporary license two weeks before completing degree requirements, but don’t apply earlier than that
- Plan to submit a temporary license application at least 3 to 5 business days before your hire date if you are starting a social work position to allow for processing
- Review [Top Ten Temporary License Tips for Students](#) for more helpful information



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Commission on Accreditation  
Commission on Educational Policy

2015

# EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs

Developed by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Educational Policy and the CSWE Commission on Accreditation; Educational Policy approved by the CSWE Board of Directors on March 20, 2015; Accreditation Standards approved by the CSWE Commission on Accreditation on June 11, 2015.

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Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve. The Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Authority to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education in the United States and its territories. The COA is responsible for formulating, promulgating, and implementing the accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work, for ensuring the standards define competent preparation, and for confirming that accredited social work programs meet the standards. To this end, CSWE's COA administers a multistep accreditation process that involves program self-studies and benchmarks, site visits, and COA reviews.

The accreditation review process provides professional judgments on the quality of a social work education program in an institution. These findings are based on applying the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) promulgated by the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and the COA. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment of the quality of the program offered and to encourage continual improvement. Moreover, systematic examination of compliance with established standards supports public confidence in the quality of professional social work education and in the competence of social work practice.

### EPAS Revision Process

The COA and the COEP are responsible for revising the EPAS. The revision takes place in accordance with the CSWE bylaws, which mandate that the policy statement be reviewed by COEP "at periodic intervals not to exceed 7 years." CSWE's recognition by the Council for Higher Education Authority also requires that accreditors have a process whereby standards are reviewed periodically by the COA.

The most recent standards review process took more than 5 years and resulted in three drafts issued for public review and comment. The intent of the COA and the COEP was to solicit feedback from as many constituents as possible in as many ways as possible. The COEP and the COA would like to thank the programs, individuals, organizations, and communities of interest that provided feedback on all of the drafts.

The educational policy, which details the new social work competencies for the 2015 EPAS, was developed by COEP and approved by the CSWE Board of Directors on March 20, 2015. The accreditation standards were developed and approved by the COA on June 11, 2015. Programs that have reaffirmation reviews in October 2017 or later will use the 2015 EPAS to prepare their self-studies. Programs applying for candidacy in 2016 and beyond would use the 2015 EPAS for their benchmark documents.

For updated information about the 2015 EPAS, please visit [www.cswe.org/Accreditation](http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation) or send an e-mail to [accreditation@cswe.org](mailto:accreditation@cswe.org).

July 2015

## PURPOSE: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, EDUCATION, AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels shapes the profession's future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, the promotion of evidence-informed practice through scientific inquiry, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community. Social work education is advanced by the scholarship of teaching and learning, and scientific inquiry into its multifaceted dimensions, processes, and outcomes.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate and master's level social work programs. EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models and methods of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparable outcomes across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.

EPAS describe four features of an integrated curriculum design: (1) program mission and goals, (2) explicit curriculum, (3) implicit curriculum, and (4) assessment. The educational policy and the accreditation standards are conceptually linked to each other. Educational Policy describes each curriculum feature. Accreditation standards are derived from the Educational policy and specify the requirements used to develop and maintain an accredited social work program at the baccalaureate (B) or master's (M) level.

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It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models and methods of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparable outcomes across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.

## COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

In 2008 CSWE adopted a competency-based education framework for its EPAS. As in related health and human service professions, the policy moved from a model of curriculum design focused on content (what students should be taught) and structure (the format and organization of educational components) to one focused on student learning outcomes. A competency-based approach refers to identifying and assessing what students demonstrate in practice. In social work this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy.

Competency-based education rests upon a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Competency-based education is an outcomes-oriented approach to curriculum design. The goal of the outcomes approach is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice. In EPAS, social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

Using a curriculum design that begins with the outcomes, expressed as the expected competencies, programs develop the substantive content, pedagogical approach, and educational activities that provide learning opportunities for students to demonstrate the competencies.

Assessment of student learning outcomes is an essential component of competency-based education. Assessment provides evidence that students have demonstrated the level of competence necessary to enter professional practice, which in turn shows programs are successful in achieving their goals. Assessment information is used to improve the educational program and the methods used to assess student learning outcomes.

Programs assess students' demonstration of competence. The assessment methods used by programs gather data that serve as evidence of student learning outcomes and the demonstration of competence. Understanding social work practice is complex and multi-dimensional, the assessment methods used by programs and the data collected may vary by context.



Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being.

The nine Social Work Competencies are listed below. Programs may add competencies that are consistent with their mission and goals and respond to their context. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

## Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

## Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

## Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

**Competency 1:** Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

**Competency 2:** Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

**Competency 3:** Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

**Competency 4:** Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

**Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice

**Competency 6:** Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**Competency 8:** Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**Competency 9:** Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.

Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

# PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

## Educational Policy 1.0—Program Mission and Goals

The mission and goals of each social work program address the profession's purpose, are grounded in core professional values, and are informed by program context.

### *Values*

Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work. These values underpin the explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the profession's commitment to respect for all people and the quest for social and economic justice.

### *Program Context*

Context encompasses the mission of the institution in which the program is located and the needs and opportunities associated with the setting and program options. Programs are further influenced by their practice communities, which are informed by their historical, political, economic, environmental, social, cultural, demographic, local, regional, and global contexts and by the ways they elect to engage these factors. Additional factors include new knowledge, technology, and ideas that may have a bearing on contemporary and future social work education, practice, and research.

## Accreditation Standard 1.0—Program Mission and Goals

- 1.0.1** The program submits its mission statement and explains how it is consistent with the profession's purpose and values.
- 1.0.2** The program explains how its mission is consistent with the institutional mission and the program's context across all program options.
- 1.0.3** The program identifies its goals and demonstrates how they are derived from the program's mission.



Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work.

The explicit curriculum constitutes the program's formal educational structure and includes the courses and field education used for each of its program options. Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts, which provide the intellectual basis for the professional curriculum and inform its design. Using a competency-based education framework, the explicit curriculum prepares students for professional practice at the baccalaureate and master's levels. Baccalaureate programs prepare students for generalist practice. Master's programs prepare students for generalist practice and specialized practice. The explicit curriculum, including field education, may include forms of technology as a component of the curriculum.

## Educational Policy 2.0—Generalist Practice

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice.

## Accreditation Standard B2.0—Generalist Practice

- B2.0.1** The program explains how its mission and goals are consistent with generalist practice as defined in EP 2.0.
- B2.0.2** The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.
- B2.0.3** The program provides a matrix that illustrates how its curriculum content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

## Accreditation Standard M2.0—Generalist Practice

- M2.0.1** The program explains how its mission and goals are consistent with generalist practice as defined in EP 2.0.
- M2.0.2** The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for generalist practice demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.
- M2.0.3** The program provides a matrix that illustrates how its generalist practice content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

### Educational Policy M2.1—Specialized Practice

Specialized practice builds on generalist practice as described in EP 2.0, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies in their area of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices, and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

The master's program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

### Accreditation Standard M2.1—Specialized Practice

- M2.1.1** The program identifies its area(s) of specialized practice (EP M2.1), and demonstrates how it builds on generalist practice.
- M2.1.2** The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for specialized practice demonstrating how the design is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.
- M2.1.3** The program describes how its area(s) of specialized practice extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies (and any additional competencies developed by the program) to prepare students for practice in the area(s) of specialization.
- M2.1.4** For each area of specialized practice, the program provides a matrix that illustrates how its curriculum content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

### Educational Policy 2.2—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

## Accreditation Standard 2.2—Field Education

- 2.2.1** The program explains how its field education program connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom and field settings.
- B2.2.2** The program explains how its field education program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings.
- M2.2.2** The program explains how its field education program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings.
- M2.2.3** The program explains how its field education program provides specialized practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies within an area of specialized practice and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings.
- 2.2.4** The program explains how students across all program options in its field education program demonstrate social work competencies through in-person contact with clients and constituencies.
- 2.2.5** The program describes how its field education program provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and a minimum of 900 hours for master's programs.
- 2.2.6** The program provides its criteria for admission into field education and explains how its field education program admits only those students who have met the program's specified criteria.
- 2.2.7** The program describes how its field education program specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings; placing and monitoring students; supporting student safety; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the social work competencies.
- 2.2.8** The program describes how its field education program maintains contact with field settings across all program options. The program explains how on-site contact or other methods are used to monitor student learning and field setting effectiveness.
- B2.2.9** The program describes how its field education program specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program social work competencies. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree or does not have the required experience, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.
- M2.2.9** The program describes how its field education program specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program social work competencies. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-master's social work practice experience. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree or does not have the required experience, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.
- 2.2.10** The program describes how its field education program provides orientation, field instruction training, and continuing dialog with field education settings and field instructors.
- 2.2.11** The program describes how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program's commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty; administrative structure; and resources. The implicit curriculum is manifested through policies that are fair and transparent in substance and implementation, the qualifications of the faculty, and the adequacy and fair distribution of resources. The culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; the support for difference and diversity; and the values and priorities in the educational environment, including the field setting, inform the student's learning and development. The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program's graduates. Heightened awareness of the importance of the implicit curriculum promotes an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession and the mission, goals, and context of the program.

## Educational Policy 3.0—Diversity

The program's expectation for diversity is reflected in its learning environment, which provides the context through which students learn about differences, to value and respect diversity, and develop a commitment to cultural humility. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The learning environment consists of the program's institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speaker series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives; and the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body.

## Accreditation Standard 3.0—Diversity

- 3.0.1** The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment that models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.
- 3.0.2** The program explains how these efforts provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- 3.0.3** The program describes specific plans to continually improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

## Educational Policy 3.1—Student Development

Educational preparation and commitment to the profession are essential qualities in the admission and development of students for professional practice. Student participation in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs are important for students' professional development.

To promote the social work education continuum, graduates of baccalaureate social work programs admitted to master's social work programs are presented with an articulated pathway toward specialized practice.

## Accreditation Standard 3.1—Student Development: Admissions; Advisement, Retention, and Termination; and Student Participation

### *Admissions*

- B3.1.1** The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission to the social work program.

- M3.1.1** The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission to the social work program. The criteria for admission to the master's program must include an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association. Baccalaureate social work graduates entering master's social work programs are not to repeat what has been achieved in their baccalaureate social work programs.
- 3.1.2** The program describes the policies and procedures for evaluating applications and notifying applicants of the decision and any contingent conditions associated with admission.
- M3.1.3** The program describes the policies and procedures used for awarding advanced standing. The program indicates that advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services,\* or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.
- 3.1.4** The program describes its policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits.
- 3.1.5** The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

#### *Advisement, retention, and termination*

- 3.1.6** The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.
- 3.1.7** The program submits its policies and procedures for evaluating student's academic and professional performance, including grievance policies and procedures. The program describes how it informs students of its criteria for evaluating their academic and professional performance and its policies and procedures for grievance.
- 3.1.8** The program submits its policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment in the social work program for reasons of academic and professional performance. The program describes how it informs students of these policies and procedures.

#### *Student participation*

- 3.1.9** The program submits its policies and procedures specifying students' rights and opportunities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.
- 3.1.10** The program describes how it provides opportunities and encourages students to organize in their interests.

### **Educational Policy 3.2—Faculty**

Faculty qualifications, including experience related to the Social Work Competencies, an appropriate student-faculty ratio, and sufficient faculty to carry out a program's mission and goals, are essential for developing an educational environment that promotes, emulates, and teaches students the knowledge, values, and skills expected of professional social workers. Through their teaching, research, scholarship, and service—as well as their interactions with one another, administration, students, and community—the program's faculty models the behavior and values expected of professional social workers. Programs demonstrate that faculty is qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned.

### **Accreditation Standard 3.2—Faculty**

- 3.2.1** The program identifies each full- and part-time social work faculty member and discusses his or her qualifications, competence, expertise in social work education and practice, and years of service to the program.
- 3.2.2** The program documents that faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.
- 3.2.3** The program documents a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and not greater than 1:12 for master's programs and explains how this ratio is calculated. In addition, the program explains how faculty size is commensurate with the number and type of curricular offerings in class and field; number of program options; class size; number of students; advising; and the faculty's teaching, scholarly, and service responsibilities.

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\* This and all future references to degrees from social work programs accredited by CSWE, include degrees from CSWE-accredited programs or recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.

- B3.2.4** The baccalaureate social work program identifies no fewer than two full-time faculty assigned to the baccalaureate program, with full-time appointment in social work, and whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program. The majority of the total full-time baccalaureate social work program faculty has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred.
- M3.2.4** The master's social work program identifies no fewer than six full-time faculty with master's degrees in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and whose principal assignment is to the master's program. The majority of the full-time master's social work program faculty has a master's degree in social work and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.
- 3.2.5** The program describes its faculty workload policy and discusses how the policy supports the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.
- 3.2.6** Faculty demonstrate ongoing professional development as teachers, scholars, and practitioners through dissemination of research and scholarship, exchanges with external constituencies such as practitioners and agencies, and through other professionally relevant creative activities that support the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.
- 3.2.7** The program demonstrates how its faculty models the behavior and values of the profession in the program's educational environment.

### Educational Policy 3.3—Administrative and Governance Structure

Social work faculty and administrators, based on their education, knowledge, and skills, are best suited to make decisions regarding the delivery of social work education. Faculty and administrators exercise autonomy in designing an administrative and leadership structure, developing curriculum, and formulating and implementing policies that support the education of competent social workers. The administrative structure is sufficient to carry out the program's mission and goals. In recognition of the importance of field education as the signature pedagogy, programs must provide an administrative structure and adequate resources for systematically designing, supervising, coordinating, and evaluating field education across all program options.

### Accreditation Standard 3.3—Administrative Structure

- 3.3.1** The program describes its administrative structure and shows how it provides the necessary autonomy to achieve the program's mission and goals.
- 3.3.2** The program describes how the social work faculty has responsibility for defining program curriculum consistent with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the institution's policies.
- 3.3.3** The program describes how the administration and faculty of the social work program participate in formulating and implementing policies related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure of program personnel.
- 3.3.4** The program identifies the social work program director. Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's programs appoint a separate director for each.
  - B3.3.4(a)** The program describes the baccalaureate program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program with a doctoral degree in social work preferred.
  - B3.3.4(b)** The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work baccalaureate program.
  - B3.3.4(c)** The program describes the procedures for calculating the program director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions specific to responsibilities of the social work program, a minimum of 25% assigned time is required at the baccalaureate level. The program discusses that this time is sufficient.
  - M3.3.4(a)** The program describes the master's program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the master's program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.
  - M3.3.4(b)** The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work master's program.

**M3.3.4(c)** The program describes the procedures for determining the program director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions specific to responsibilities of the social work program, a minimum of 50% assigned time is required at the master's level. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

**3.3.5** The program identifies the field education director.

**3.3.5(a)** The program describes the field director's ability to provide leadership in the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.

**B3.3.5(b)** The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience.

**M3.3.5(b)** The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.

**B3.3.5(c)** The program describes the procedures for calculating the field director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field education program, at least 25% assigned time is required for baccalaureate programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

**M3.3.5(c)** The program describes the procedures for calculating the field director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field education program at least 50% assigned time is required for master's programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

**3.3.6** The program describes its administrative structure for field education and explains how its resources (personnel, time and technological support) are sufficient to administer its field education program to meet its mission and goals.

### Educational Policy 3.4—Resources

Adequate resources are fundamental to creating, maintaining, and improving an educational environment that supports the development of competent social work practitioners. Social work programs have the necessary resources to carry out the program's mission and goals and to support learning and professionalization of students and program improvement.

### Accreditation Standard 3.4—Resources

**3.4.1** The program describes the procedures for budget development and administration it uses to achieve its mission and goals. The program submits a completed budget form and explains how its financial resources are sufficient and stable to achieve its mission and goals.

**3.4.2** The program describes how it uses resources to address challenges and continuously improve the program.

**3.4.3** The program demonstrates that it has sufficient support staff, other personnel, and technological resources to support all of its educational activities, mission and goals.

**3.4.4** The program submits a library report that demonstrates access to social work and other informational and educational resources necessary for achieving its mission and goals.

**3.4.5** The program describes and demonstrates sufficient office and classroom space and/or computer-mediated access to achieve its mission and goals.

**3.4.6** The program describes, for each program option, the availability of and access to assistive technology, including materials in alternative formats.

## Educational Policy 4.0—Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment is an integral component of competency-based education. Assessment involves the systematic gathering of data about student performance of Social Work Competencies at both the generalist and specialized levels of practice.

Competence is perceived as holistic, involving both performance and the knowledge, values, critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment that inform performance. Assessment therefore must be multi-dimensional and integrated to capture the demonstration of the competencies and the quality of internal processing informing the performance of the competencies. Assessment is best done while students are engaged in practice tasks or activities that approximate social work practice as closely as possible. Practice often requires the performance of multiple competencies simultaneously; therefore, assessment of those competencies may optimally be carried out at the same time.

Programs assess students' demonstration of the Social Work Competencies through the use of multi-dimensional assessment methods. Assessment methods are developed to gather data that serve as evidence of student learning outcomes and the demonstration of competence. Understanding social work practice is complex and multi-dimensional, the assessment methods used and the data collected may vary by context.

Assessment information is used to guide student learning, assess student outcomes, assess and improve effectiveness of the curriculum, and strengthen the assessment methods used.

Assessment also involves gathering data regarding the implicit curriculum, which may include but is not limited to an assessment of diversity, student development, faculty, administrative and governance structure, and resources. Data from assessment continuously inform and promote change in the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum to enhance attainment of Social Work Competencies.

## Accreditation Standard 4.0—Assessment

- 4.0.1** The program presents its plan for ongoing assessment of student outcomes for all identified competencies in the generalist level of practice (baccalaureate social work programs) and the generalist and specialized levels of practice (master's social work programs). Assessment of competence is done by program designated faculty or field personnel. The plan includes:
- A description of the assessment procedures that detail when, where, and how each competency is assessed for each program option.
  - At least two measures assess each competency. One of the assessment measures is based on demonstration of the competency in real or simulated practice situations.
  - An explanation of how the assessment plan measures multiple dimensions of each competency, as described in EP 4.0.
  - Benchmarks for each competency, a rationale for each benchmark, and a description of how it is determined that students' performance meets the benchmark.
  - An explanation of how the program determines the percentage of students achieving the benchmark.
  - Copies of all assessment measures used to assess all identified competencies.
- 4.0.2** The program provides its most recent year of summary data and outcomes for the assessment of each of the identified competencies, specifying the percentage of students achieving program benchmarks for each program option.
- 4.0.3** The program uses Form AS 4(B) and/or Form AS 4(M) to report its most recent assessment outcomes for each program option to constituents and the public on its website and routinely up-dates (minimally every 2 years) its findings.
- 4.0.4** The program describes the process used to evaluate outcomes and their implications for program renewal across program options. It discusses specific changes it has made in the program based on these assessment outcomes with clear links to the data.
- 4.0.5** For each program option, the program provides its plan and summary data for the assessment of the implicit curriculum as defined in EP 4.0 from program defined stakeholders. The program discusses implications for program renewal and specific changes it has made based on these assessment outcomes.





COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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Strengthening the Profession of Social Work

**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)  
Commission on Accreditation (COA)  
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) | Baccalaureate and Master's Accreditation**  
*Last updated March 16, 2022*

*Note: All questions regarding accreditation should be directed to the [accreditation team](#).*

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## **International Social Work Degrees**

### **1. Are social work programs outside the United States accredited by CSWE?**

- a. No. The accrediting authority of CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) extends only to the United States and its territories. If you attended a social work program overseas and wish to work in the United States, it is advisable to have your degree evaluated by CSWE's [International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service \(ISWDRES\)](#).
- b. Although CSWE does not accredit social work programs in Canada, graduates of Canadian programs accredited by the [CASWE](#) (formerly CASSW) are recognized through a [memorandum of understanding](#) as having earned a degree equivalent to graduates from a CSWE-COA-accredited program.

### **2. Does CSWE or ISWDRES keep a list of international social work programs previously recognized as equivalent?**

- a. No. CSWE's [International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service \(ISWDRES\)](#) evaluates individually earned degrees, not the social work programs from which the degree was earned. Thus, there are no pre-approved international social work programs. Each applicant is reviewed individually and independently after earning their degree. The only exception is graduates covered by the [memorandum of understanding](#) with [CASWE](#) (formerly CASSW), the Canadian social work accrediting agency, are automatically recognized as having earned a degree equivalent to graduates from a CSWE-COA-accredited program.

## **Scope of Accreditation**

### **3. What accreditation services does CSWE provide?**

- a. The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) has outlined their [scope, services, resources, and boundaries](#) and posted it publicly to the [CSWE accreditation webpage](#).

### **4. Why does CSWE-COA not accredit associate degree programs, PhD programs, and minors?**

- a. CSWE-COA limits its accreditation function to programs that prepare students for professional social work practice (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, professional practice doctoral, and post-master's fellowship programs). In general, associate degree programs prepare students for paraprofessional-level positions in social service agencies. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs are typically research-oriented and primarily prepare students for academic, research, or administrative positions. Additionally, zero health profession accreditors regulate PhD programs. Minors prepare students for exploration of professional social work pathways.

**5. Where can I find trustworthy accreditation information?**

- a. CSWE's [Department of Social Work Accreditation \(DOSWA\)](#) is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.
- b. The accreditation team has worked diligently to clarify and provide disclaimers that accreditation-related information not published or provided directly by the accreditation team or COA is not vetted by nor officially endorsed.
- c. This includes any information shared by CSWE members, faculty, administrators, consultants, and vendors in shared academic spaces, such as CSWE's Annual Program Meeting (APM).

**6. Is accreditation-related information shared at CSWE's Annual Program Meeting (APM) reliable, valid, and accurate?**

- a. If the information is shared directly by member(s) of the accreditation team, then **yes**, it is accurate. The only endorsed services, content, trainings and workshops, publications, presentations, templates, tools, sample matrices, resources, etc. are those that CSWE-COA or the accreditation team create and publish ourselves on the [CSWE accreditation website](#).
- b. If the information is shared by any other party external to the CSWE's accreditation team, then **no**, the information may be inaccurate. Other parties may include CSWE members, faculty, administrators, consultants, vendors, etc. Always verify the source of your information and [contact the accreditation team](#) to ensure you are receiving the most accurate and current information!
- c. Companies are welcome to exhibit at CSWE's annual conference, however, that does not mean that CSWE, the accreditation team, nor COA is endorsing their product. The exhibit hall is outside of the purview of the accrediting agency.
- d. Finally, it is not a function of the COA to evaluate external accreditation-related information or products for compliance with the EPAS. Rather programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the EPAS. Programs are then independently reviewed for compliance via the peer-reviewed accreditation processes. Programs are empowered to review the variety of rich resources available on the [CSWE accreditation website](#) and/or contact their [program's accreditation specialist](#) as questions arise.

**7. Does CSWE have a list of qualified consultants to help us with our accreditation processes?**

- a. No. Per section 1.2.13 in the [EPAS Handbook](#), CSWE does not recommend the use of external paid consultants. External consultants hired by programs to assist in their reaffirmation of accreditation or progression through candidacy status are not employees or agents of CSWE. CSWE is in no way responsible for the services provided by such

consultants, and in no way does CSWE guarantee, recommend, or endorse the services of any consultant.

- b. It is recommended that your program review the [accreditation services](#) offered and collaborate with your [program's accreditation specialist](#), as the accreditation team is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.

## **Verifying Accreditation Status**

### **8. How do I know if my social work program is accredited?**

- a. A comprehensive list of accredited and candidacy programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on the CSWE website.

### **9. My program is expecting an accreditation decision from the COA. When will this information be shared?**

- a. Changes in accreditation status are posted publicly 30-days following each COA meeting on the [CSWE website](#).
  - i. February COA meeting decisions are posted mid-March.
  - ii. June COA meeting decisions are posted mid-July.
  - iii. October COA meeting decision are posted mid-November.
- b. Per section 1.1.10 in the EPAS Handbook, official decision letters are sent electronically to programs 30-45 days after each COA meeting.
  - i. February COA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late March.
  - ii. June COA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late July.
  - iii. October COA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late November.

### **10. I couldn't find my social work program listed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). Is my program accredited?**

- a. Our directory is searchable by all institutional names, program names, and former names.
- b. Be sure to also check [Formerly Accredited or Approved BSW Programs](#) or [Formerly Accredited MSW Programs](#).
- c. If you are unable to locate a record of your social work program on the CSWE website, then it may not be accredited.
- d. Contact a member of the [accreditation team](#) to verify the status of your social work program.

### **11. Does CSWE have a list of accredited doctoral-level social work programs?**

- a. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation is currently piloting the accreditation of professional practice doctoral programs (i.e., DSW programs). PhD programs are not accredited by CSWE-COA. Please visit this [website](#) for further information regarding the piloting initiative.

## **Pre-Candidacy & Candidacy Status**

### **12. What does it mean when a program is in candidacy?**

- a. Candidacy indicates that the social work program has made progress toward meeting criteria for the program quality assessment as evaluated via a peer review process. A program that has attained Candidacy has demonstrated a commitment to meeting the compliance standards set by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), but has not yet demonstrated full compliance.
- b. Students who enter programs that attain Candidacy in or before the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program as long as the program attains Initial Accreditation. Candidacy is typically a three (3) year process and attaining Candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain Initial Accreditation. Candidacy applies to all program sites (i.e., locations) and delivery methods of the program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.
- c. Programs in candidacy are issued a retroactive accreditation date which goes into effect once the program gains Initial Accreditation. This date is the academic year in which the program was granted candidacy status. For example, if a program was granted candidacy status in the academic year of 2020-2021, any student entering the program in the fall of 2020 and beyond will be considered to have graduated from an accredited social work program so long as the program receives its eventual Initial Accreditation.
- d. Read more about the Candidacy process in the Candidacy section of the [EPAS Handbook](#) housed on the CSWE website.
- e. To understand how candidacy status will affect you as a student, contact your social work program director and/or a member of the [accreditation team](#). Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

### **13. What does it mean when a program is pre-candidacy?**

- a. Pre-Candidacy indicates that the social work program has submitted an application to be reviewed for Candidacy. A program that has attained Pre-Candidacy has not yet been reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) or been verified to be in compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).
- b. Students who enter the program while it is still in Pre-Candidacy will not be recognized as attending a program in Candidacy unless the program attains Candidacy in the academic year in which those students enter. The Candidacy Process is typically a three (3)-year process and there is no guarantee that a program in Pre-Candidacy will eventually attain Candidacy or Initial Accreditation. Students who enter programs that

attain Candidacy in or before the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program as long as the program attains Initial Accreditation. Pre-Candidacy applies to all program sites (i.e., locations) and delivery methods of the program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

- c. Read more about the Pre-Candidacy process in the Candidacy section of the [EPAS Handbook](#) housed on the CSWE website.
- d. To understand how candidacy status will affect you as a student, contact your social work program director and/or a member of the [accreditation team](#). Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

### **Conditional Status**

#### **14. My program was placed on conditional accredited status. How does this affect me as a student?**

- a. Students who graduate from programs on Conditional Accredited Status will still be recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program.
- b. Changes in accreditation status are posted publicly 30-days following each COA meeting on the [CSWE website](#).
  - i. February COA meeting decisions are posted mid-March.
  - ii. June COA meeting decisions are posted mid-July.
  - iii. October COA meeting decision are posted mid-November.
- c. The COA places a program on conditional accredited status when the program is found out of compliance with one (1) or more Educational Policy or Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within one (1) year. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts The COA's decision, it submits a restoration report within one (1) year.

### **Selecting a Social Work Program**

#### **15. How do I decide which social work program is best for me?**

- a. Students are encouraged to select a program that meets both your professional and personal goals.
- b. Ask practical questions, such as:
  - i. Can I live here for the next two (2) or four (4) years?
  - ii. Is the program delivered in a way that supports my learning style and lifestyle needs (i.e., online, hybrid, location-based, evening and weekend options, campus experience, etc.)?

- iii. Is it affordable?
  - iv. Is the institution too large or too small?
  - v. Will I need to commute?
  - vi. Does the program offer the specialization or concentration I want?
  - vii. Does the program appear to have a faculty and staff with whom I can collaborate?
  - viii. Are there ample field placement opportunities in my area of interest?
- c. You can access CSWE's online [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) to review a listing of accredited and candidate social work programs. The Directory is sortable by a number of features, attributes, and options to assist you in narrowing your search. Once you have located programs that interest you, you are encouraged to use the contact information in the directory to contact those programs directly.

**16. Which are the best social work programs in the United States?**

- a. CSWE-COA accredits social work education programs; it does not provide qualitative information, subjective judgments, nor opinions about programs. Nor do we compare or "rank" them. Accreditation is meant to provide assurance that a program has met the profession's minimum standards for professional social work education.

**17. Can CSWE provide me guidance or advice in selecting a social work program for me?**

- a. No, providing enrollment guidance or career advice is not a service CSWE provides as we do not rank, recommend, nor comment on the quality of accredited and candidate programs. All accredited and candidate programs must meet the current set of standards. As an accrediting body, CSWE-COA maintains ethical boundaries and impartiality.
- b. We do offer a variety of resources to assist in selecting an accredited program. CSWE houses the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). You are encouraged to utilize the Directory, which is sortable by a number of features, as you reflect on your career goals and make an informed decision about your educational journey.

**18. Does CSWE have a master list of tuition and fees for each accredited program?**

- a. No, this is not a service provided by CSWE as tuition, fees, and other expenses associated with educational programs is governed by each individual institution. Review the social work program's website for information regarding cost of attendance or contact the program directly. Contact information for all accredited and candidate social work programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on CSWE website.

**19. Does CSWE offer scholarships, fellowships, grants, or other funding for my social work studies?**

- a. Learn more about CSWE offerings and external funding opportunities on the [CSWE website](#).

**Online & Distance Learning**

**20. Are there any CSWE-COA-accredited, distance-learning or online learning social work programs?**

- a. Yes, the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) includes online program options and all locations covered by the program's accreditation status. All accredited and candidate programs are subject to the same accreditation standards and review criteria by the Commission on Accreditation (COA), regardless of the curriculum delivery methods used.
- b. Many accredited social work programs utilize distance education for some or all of their courses and curriculum. Many offer part-time, extended-day, or evening courses at their main, satellite, or branch campuses.
- c. Each program design is different, and each may have specific admissions requirements for its distance-education programs. Please contact your program of interest directly to inquire! Contact information for all accredited and candidate social work programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on CSWE website.

**Admissions**

**21. Can I enter an accredited master's social work program without a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree?**

- a. No. The criteria for admission to a master's social work program must include an earned baccalaureate degree in any discipline from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.
- b. This includes individuals whose degree was recognized as equivalent through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service (ISWDRES) and graduates from Canadian social work programs accredited by CASWE covered by the memorandum of understanding between CSWE and CASWE.
- c. Students may also contact the [regional accrediting body](#) that accredits institution they are interested in attending to inquire if there is a process for determining equivalency or recognizing the degree(s) previously received as comparable to a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree. As long as the regional accrediting body recognizes the degree as comparable, program may admit those students.
- d. Please note that while the CSWE-COA accrediting body sets the minimum standards, it is completely within the purview of each accredited social work program to institute their own admission criteria and requirements.

Most master's social work programs admit students with a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree in any field of study. An accredited baccalaureate social work degree is not a CSWE-COA requirement for admission to a master's social work program. However, students are encouraged to contact their program of interest directly to ensure they meet all admission criteria / requirements.

## **Field Education**

### **22. How many field hours must I complete?**

- a. Baccalaureate students must complete a minimum of 400 field education hours and master's students must complete a minimum of 900 field education hours. Advanced standing students must complete a minimum of 900 hours between their baccalaureate and master's social work programs. While the CSWE-COA accrediting body determines the minimum standards, individual programs may elect to require hours above the minimum.

### **23. Can I have a paid social work field education placement?**

- a. Neither the CSWE-COA accrediting body nor the current set of standards prohibit a student from completing a paid field education placement.
- b. It is within the purview of each social work program to develop policies regarding field placements at the same organization at which a student is employed. The relationships between an employee and employer is different than a student and field placement. An employee is responsible for aiding the organization; whereas the field-setting is responsible for supporting the student learner. The program is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the field education learning environment. We advise arranging a conversation with your program's field director as they may assist you in understanding your program's specific field education policies and procedures. Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#)

### **24. What are the required credentials for field instructors?**

- a. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work.
- b. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-master's social work practice experience (defined in the [2015 EPAS Glossary](#)).
- c. While these are minimum required credentials, each accredited social work program may institute additional requirements.
- d. For cases in which a field instructor does not have the minimum required credentials, the social work program is responsible for developing and implementing a process to reinforce the social work perspective with

students. This allows programs to work flexibly in rural settings, in cases where a credentialed field instructor leaves, with large agencies that have limited social workers onsite, or settings that are high quality yet do not have a social worker onsite.

**25. How often must I meet with my field instructor?**

- a. The frequency and format of field education supervision is within the purview of each accredited social work program. The program develops their expectations regarding field education supervision. We advise arranging a conversation with your program's field director as they may assist you in understanding your program's specific field education policies and procedures. Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

**26. Does CSWE determine what activities I will complete at my field placement?**

- a. No. Roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for social work practice differ per field agency site. CSWE employs a competency-based education model where students learn the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive & effective processes necessary for generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and/or specialized practice within a certain area of specialization. Please refer to the social work competencies in the EPAS for more information regarding expected student learning outcomes in classroom and field settings.

**Advanced Standing Status**

**27. Can I enter a master's program as advanced standing status if I earned my baccalaureate social work degree more than 5-7 years ago?**

- a. Each accredited master's social work program selects and implements their own criteria for issuing advanced standing status. At minimum advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE-COA, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services,\* or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors (Canada).

**28. Can I enter program as advanced standing status if I did not earn an accredited baccalaureate social work degree?**

- a. No. An accredited baccalaureate social work degree is required to qualify for advanced standing status. Check your program's accredited status is the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

## **Transfer Credits**

### **29. Can I transfer credits to my new social work program?**

- a. The accreditation process respects each institution's policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits. Thus, each accredited program may determine which (if any) courses may be transferred/waived from your previous studies.

## **Complaints**

### **30. I have a complaint about my social work program, how do I file it with CSWE-COA?**

- a. Formal complaints to the accrediting body **must pertain to matters related to program compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**. The Commission on Accreditation (COA) is not authorized to adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual faculty or student grievances against a program. Complainants must use all appropriate institutional and professional channels of appeal before filing a formal complaint with CSWE.
- b. Please refer to complaint policies and procedures in section 1.2.1 in the [EPAS Handbook](#) for filing a complaint.

## **Self-Study, Benchmark, and Other Accreditation Documents**

### **31. What academic year should be captured in the self-study?**

- a. The self-study content commonly reflects the full academic year prior to the submission of the document. This is typically referred to as the “year-of-record” and is flexible based upon the program’s document due date.
- b. However, a more accurate framing is to consider the self-study as a rolling snapshot of where the program currently is; not reflecting back on previous or outdated operations and information.
- c. While the document may capture the year prior to submission of the self-study, the program should be cognizant to update their documents regarding any changes that strengthen compliance. The most frequent changes include composition of faculty, students, staff, other personnel, adding / removing program options, updated assessment data, updates to policies or procedures, or enhancements made to program operations to strengthen compliance with the EPAS. This list is not exhaustive, so it is important to ensure that all information, personnel, operations, program options, and data are captured in the self-study is current, accurate, and aligned with the EPAS.
- d. With regard to program personnel, the program should capture the most up-to-date information in the self-study to the best of their ability. This ensures the site visitor has access to current faculty and personnel

information reflecting those with whom they will meet on campus during their visit.

- e. In the self-study, programs should capture all components they wish to have reaffirmed for compliance with the EPAS. Remember that programs are requesting the COA to affirm these operations for the next 8-years. So, the self-study should capture the program's best compliance plan that reflects current operations now and moving forward for the next 8-years. *Note: review policy 1.2.4 Program Changes in the [EPAS Handbook](#) for information on changes between review cycles.*
- f. Submitting outdated information in the self-study, benchmark, or other accreditation documents may result in a citation or other action by the COA in order to request the most current and accurate program materials.

**32. May I request a sample self-study, benchmark, or other accreditation-related document as a model?**

- a. No. Per section 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#), accreditation staff do not share program-specific information with other programs for any purpose, including independent scholarly research. Staff do not share program contact information, program lists, accreditation spreadsheets, or other individualized program information not already publicly available on the CSWE website and [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).
- b. The accreditation team has worked diligently and are proud to provide high quality [services](#), content, trainings and workshops, publications, presentations, templates, tools, sample matrices, resources, and more to provide clear, proactive, and transparent support throughout the accreditation process and in-between review cycles. Check out all offerings on the [CSWE accreditation webpage](#).
- c. The accreditation team recommends utilizing the Self-Study / Initial Accreditation Optional Self-Study Template, Benchmark 1 Optional Template, or Benchmark 2 Optional Template as well as the Interpretation Guide to support your accreditation goals and processes.
- d. A variety of [trainings and workshops](#) are also available to help programs understand, implement, and document compliance with the EPAS.
- e. Providing samples is not a common nor advisable practice amongst accreditors as programs are encouraged to implement and document compliance with the EPAS creatively according to their program's unique context. This allows for innovation, experimentation, and continuous quality improvement to thrive.
- f. Since each program is reviewed independently, replicating a program that passed an accreditation review does not guarantee the same outcome for your program.
- g. Programs may elect to share sample documents amongst themselves, however, please remember that CSWE's [Department of Social Work Accreditation \(DOSWA\)](#) is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.

**33. Can I copy and paste our program's previous self-study as a baseline for our next self-study?**

- a. We do not advise using your program's previous self-study as the foundation for the next self-study. The program will be writing to a new set of standards with different requirements and interpretations. A fresh canvas, new perspectives, and approaching this as a continuous quality improvement and renewal process is advisable.
- b. A variety of [trainings and workshops](#) as well as [presentations](#) are also available to help programs understand, implement, and document compliance with the EPAS.

**Post-degree Training and Employment**

**34. Which type of degree is most favored by employers? Will employers differentiate between an online degree versus a degree obtained in-person?**

- a. CSWE does not rank, recommend, nor comment on the quality of accredited programs. All accredited programs must meet the current set of standards. As an accrediting body, CSWE-COA maintains ethical boundaries and impartiality. We do offer a variety of resources to assist in selecting an accredited program. CSWE houses the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). You are encouraged to utilize the Directory, which is sortable by a number of features, as you reflect on your career goals and make an informed decision about your educational journey.
- b. The professional job market is an ever-shifting landscape. CSWE nor the accrediting body compare or rank types of program delivery methods, such as online and in-person. When attending a CSWE-COA-accredited program, delivery method does not impact educational quality. All accredited programs, regardless of delivery method are required to demonstrate compliance with the same set of standards. Thus, if your employer requires a CSWE-COA-accredited degree, there is no difference between whether the degree was earned on-campus or online, from our perspective. It is CSWE-accredited.

**35. What post-degree training opportunities exist?**

- c. From 2019-2022, CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) and the Fellowship Review Committee (FRC) piloted the accreditation of post-master's social work fellowship programs. Fellowship programs are hosted by sites offering social work services in the United States, its territories, or on U.S. military installations and advance the knowledge and skills of a social work practitioner in a focused area of practice. Through completion of a fellowship program, trainees obtain advanced competencies and/or core expertise and skills beyond those attained through completion of a master's degree in social work. CSWE staff will be working in 2022 to revise fellowship accreditation materials to allow for additional fellowship

programs to seek accreditation. Updates will be communicated and posted on [this website](#) as they become available.

## **Post-Degree Licensing**

### **36. I have questions regarding licensure. Who can I speak to at CSWE?**

- d. CSWE staff do not discuss licensing. Professional social work licensure post-degree is under the authority of a designated board within each individual state government. Your state government is responsible for regulating licensure and setting criteria required to become a licensed professional social worker. Requirements may differ by state. Contact information for individual state licensing boards can be found on the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\) website](#) or through an internet search for a licensing board for a particular state. Questions regarding licensure and professional practice should be directed to the board in your state. Questions regarding the national social work licensing exams should be directed to the ASWB, the body that publishes and administers the exams.

### **37. Does CSWE-COA accredit courses required for licensure?**

- e. No. CSWE-COA accredits social work education programs not individual courses. Questions regarding post-degree licensure requirements and professional practice should be directed to the [social work board](#) in your state.

### **38. Can CSWE connect me with a supervisor per the licensing requirements in my state?**

- f. No, this is not a service provided by CSWE as licensing requirements is within the sole jurisdiction of the social work licensing board in your state. You may also consider contacting the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) or the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#) state chapter in your area regarding potential supervisors related to licensing requirements.

### **39. If I complete an online social work program or a program outside of my state, will I be able to get a license after graduation?**

- g. First, verify your program's accredited status by visiting the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). Second, note that accreditation and post-degree licensure are completely separate regulations.
- h. When attending a CSWE-COA-accredited program, delivery method does not impact educational quality. All accredited social work programs must meet the same accreditation standards. Thus, if your state-based social work licensing board requires a CSWE-COA-accredited degree, there is no difference between whether the degree was earned on-campus or

online / in-state or out-of-state, from our perspective. It is CSWE-accredited.

- i. Programs with online options work with their state higher education authority and regional accreditor to set the scope (regional, national, international, etc.) of their operations. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) nor the standards, determine the program's scope. It is within each accredited program's purview to solicit and gain approval to operate within their desired scope. Our directory is not sortable by a "regional, national, or international scope" feature.
- j. Programs may verify their approvals to operate within their desired scope by checking with the following entities / bodies: institution (university or college), institution's accreditation compliance office / officer, any federal / U.S. Department of Education contact, regional accreditor, and / or state-based higher education authority.
- k. Continue working with your program to determine if you are able to complete the degree requirements in your state of residence. For example, your licensing board may require certain courses, training, etc. in order to become licensed after graduation. Such requirements are set by your state, not CSWE. Check whether the requirements of your state and your chosen program are compatible by working with your state-based social work licensing board.
- a. CSWE staff do not discuss licensing. Professional social work licensure post-degree is under the authority of a designated board within each individual state government. Your state government is responsible for regulating licensure and setting criteria required to become a licensed professional social worker. Requirements may differ by state. Contact information for individual state licensing boards can be found on the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\) website](#) or through an internet search for a licensing board for a particular state. Questions regarding licensure and professional practice should be directed to the board in your state. Questions regarding the national social work licensing exams should be directed to the ASWB, the body that publishes and administers the exams.

## **List of Social Work Programs**

### **40. I am conducting research or interested in marketing a product/service to accredited social work programs. May I have a downloadable list or spreadsheet of social work programs with contact information?**

- I. No, as an accrediting agency and membership organization, CSWE does not share contact information for research nor marketing purposes. Additionally, due to continuous changes in the accreditation status of social work programs, CSWE does not provide a spreadsheet of accredited programs. The [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) is searchable,

updated monthly, and the most accurate mechanism for verifying accredited status or connecting with a program.

- m. Section 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#) explains that accreditation staff do not share program-specific information for any purpose, including independent scholarly research, such as program contact information, program lists, accreditation spreadsheets, or other individualized program information not already publicly available on the CSWE website and [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

## **Networking & Accreditation News**

### **41. What opportunities do social work students and educators have to network at CSWE?**

- a. All social work community members are welcome to create a profile and join [CSWE Spark](#) discussion board.
- b. CSWE's signature [Annual Program Meeting \(APM\)](#) conference is open to all in the social work education community.
- c. Field directors may join [CSWE's Council on Field Education electronic mailing list](#).
- d. External opportunities to connect include the [Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors \(BPD\) electronic mailing list](#), [National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work electronic mailing list \(for members only\)](#), and the [National Association of Social Work MyNASW community discussion board \(for members only\)](#).

### **42. Does CSWE have a listserv so that I can stay current on accreditation news?**

- a. No. CSWE maintains direct contact with members and accredited programs rather than using opt-in listservs. All accreditation-related news is sent directly to each program's primary contact's inbox per section 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#). The accreditation team also maintains a publicly available [Accreditation New Archive](#).

# CSWE Accreditation

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) is responsible for developing accreditation standards that define competent preparation and ensuring that social work programs meet these standards. In accordance with the requirements of CSWE's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the CSWE Office of Social Work Accreditation...



## **Accredited**

Fully Accredited



## **Accredited (Conditional)**

Accredited with documented noncompliance with one or more standards that must be addressed within a year



## **Accredited (Withdrawal in Progress)**

Accredited with a planned closure date



## **Candidacy**

Program has completed at least one year of Candidacy process and is moving toward full accreditation within two years



## **Pre-Candidacy**

Program has had standards approved in draft form and is scheduled to be reviewed for Candidacy status within one year

#### **102-2-6. Program approval.**

(a) Definitions. The following terms shall be defined as follows:

(1) "Core faculty member" means an individual who is part of the program's teaching staff and who meets the following conditions:

(A) Is an individual whose education, training, and experience are consistent with the individual's role within the program and are consistent with the published description of the goals, philosophy, and educational purpose of the program;

(B) is an individual whose primary professional employment is at the institution in which the program is housed; and

(C) is an individual who is identified with the program and is centrally involved in program development, decision making, and student training as demonstrated by consistent inclusion of the individual's name in public and departmental documents.

(2) "In residence," when used to describe a student, means that the student is present at the physical location of the institution for the purpose of completing coursework during which the student and one or more core faculty members are in face-to-face contact.

(3) "Primary professional employment" means a minimum of 20 hours per week of instruction, research, any other service to the institution in the course of employment, and the related administrative work.

(b) To be recognized and approved by the board, an undergraduate or graduate social work program shall be accredited by the council on social work education or shall be in substantial compliance with all of the following standards:

(1) The program shall have a curriculum plan that has been or will be fully implemented during the current academic year.

(2) The program shall have graduated a class of students or shall graduate a class of students during the current academic year.

(3) The social work program shall meet the following conditions:

(A) Have autonomy with respect to an identified budget and an established governance and administrative structure;

(B) have responsibility for participation in personnel recruitment, retention, promotion, and tenure decisions;

(C) have support staff assigned to the program; and

(D) have other necessary resources and authority required for the achievement of specified program objectives.

(4) The program shall have a field education program that is clearly incorporated as an integral component of the curriculum and the social work degree requirements. The field education program shall engage the student in supervised social work practice and experiential opportunities that apply classroom learning in the field setting.

(5) The program shall have a clear plan for the organization, implementation, and evaluation of the class and field curricula.

(6) The program shall have social work faculty advisors who are sufficiently knowledgeable about the social work program and who are available to advise social work students.

(7) The program's written policies shall make explicit the criteria for evaluation of student academic and field performance.

(8) The program's written policies shall include procedures for the termination of student participation in the professional social work degree program, and each student

shall be informed of these termination procedures.

(9) The social work program shall be contained within a college or university that is regionally accredited.

(10) No less than 50% of the required program coursework shall be completed “in residence” at one institution, and the field education program shall be completed at the same institution.

(c) In addition to the standards in subsection (b) of this regulation, each undergraduate social work program that is not accredited by the council on social work education shall meet all of the following standards:

(1) The program shall specify in the university or college course catalog that its primary educational objective is preparation for beginning professional social work practice.

(2) The program coursework shall be identified and described in the course catalog of the university or college.

(3) The program shall have a designated director whose educational credentials include either a baccalaureate or a graduate degree in social work and who holds a full-time appointment in the educational institution.

(4) Each program faculty member who teaches the content on social work practice and each program faculty member who coordinates the field education program shall fulfill these requirements:

(A) Hold a graduate degree in social work; and

(B) have had two or more years of professional social work practice experience.

(5) The core faculty shall be responsible for essential program functions, including the following duties:

(A) Regular design, modification, approval, implementation, and evaluation of the program curriculum and educational policies;

(B) systematic and continual evaluation of program results in view of the specified objectives of the program;

(C) teaching of social work practice courses and other social work courses;

(D) coordination of field education program experiences and provision of instruction for the field education program; and

(E) establishment and maintenance of program integrity and attainment of program visibility.

(6) The program director shall have primary responsibility for the coordination and educational leadership of the program and shall be provided with the time and financial resources needed to fulfill those responsibilities.

(7) The program shall have a minimum of two full-time, core faculty members whose primary assignment is to the program.

(8) The field education program provided as part of the program shall consist of a minimum of 400 clock hours successfully completed in the field setting. Except as provided by paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of K.A.R. 102-2-2a, each student participating in the field education program shall be directly supervised by an individual either licensed or academically eligible for licensure in social work in the jurisdiction in which the supervised field education program is completed.

(d) In addition to the standards of subsection (b) of this regulation, each graduate social work education program that is not accredited by the council on social work education shall meet all of the following standards:

(1) The program shall be an integral part of an educational institution that is institutionally accredited to award the master's or doctoral degree in social work.

(2) The program shall specify in the university or college course catalog that it prepares graduate students for advanced social work practice.

(3) The educational level for which accreditation has been received shall be specified in any program documents referring to accreditation.

(4) The program shall have a full-time dean or director as its chief executive officer.

(5) The graduate program shall offer, as its basic program design, two full-time academic years of professional education that leads to a graduate degree in social work. A minimum of one academic year of the program shall be in full-time status, as defined by the educational institution.

(6) Each program faculty member who teaches the content on social work practice and each program faculty member who coordinates the field education program shall fulfill these requirements:

(A) Hold a master's degree in social work;

(B) have had post-master's professional social work practice experience; and

(C) be qualified for licensure to practice social work in the state of Kansas.

(7) The program faculty shall have responsibility for curriculum design, modification, approval, and implementation and for systematic, continual evaluation of the program.

(8) The faculty shall be responsible for educational policy in matters of admission, advising, retention, and graduation of students.

(9) The faculty shall be responsible for continual and systematic guidance of students through the professional educational program.

(e) Upon request of the board, each school shall present documentation to the board that it has satisfactorily met the standards of subsection (b) and the standards of either subsection (c) or (d), as applicable.

(Authorized by K.S.A. 2005 Supp. 74-7507; K.S.A. 65-6306; implementing K.S.A. 65-6306; effective May 1, 1982; amended May 1, 1987; amended Oct. 24, 1997; amended Oct. 27, 2006.)

**Added:** Green underlined text  
**Deleted:** ~~Dark red text with a strikethrough~~  
**Vetoed:** Red text

<b>2020 WV S 312</b>	<b>Author:</b> Weld <b>Version:</b> Enacted <b>Version Date:</b> 03/24/2020
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WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Committee Substitute

for

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 312

SENATORS WELD, STOLLINGS, RUCKER, ROBERTS,

PLYMALE, MAYNARD, CLINE, HAMILTON, JEFFRIES,

WOELFEL, AND PALUMBO, original sponsors

[Passed March 5, 2020; in effect 90 days from passage]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §30-30-16 and §30-30-18 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §30-30-30, all relating to provisional licensure requirements for social workers; creating licensure exception for Bureau for Children and Families service workers; permitting emergency rulemaking; creating registration process for service workers employed by the Bureau for Children and Families; providing deadline for conversion of license to registry; and setting forth registration eligibility criteria and continuing education requirements.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 30. SOCIAL WORKERS.

§30-30-16. Provisional license to practice as a social worker.

(a) To be eligible for a provisional license to practice as a social worker, the applicant must:

(1) Submit an application to the board;

(2) Be at least 18 years of age;

(3) Have a baccalaureate degree in a related field, as provided by legislative rule;

(4) Have obtained regular supervised employment, or the reasonable promise of regular supervised employment, contingent upon receiving a provisional license, in a critical social work workforce shortage position, area, or setting requiring a social work license: Provided, That such employment shall not be as an independent practitioner, contracted employee, sole proprietor, consultant, or other nonregular employment;

(5) Have satisfied the board that he or she merits the public trust by providing the board with three letters of recommendation from persons not related to the applicant;

(6) Not be an alcohol or drug abuser, as these terms are defined in §27-1A-11 of this code: Provided, That an applicant in an active recovery process, which may, in the discretion of the board, be evidenced by participation in an acknowledged substance abuse treatment and/or recovery program, may be considered;

(7) Not have been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction within five years preceding the date of application for license, which conviction remains unreversed;

(8) Not have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony in any jurisdiction if the offense for which he or she was convicted related to the practice of social work, which conviction remains unreversed; and

(9) Meet any other requirements established by the board.

(b) The board shall promulgate emergency rules, in accordance with §29A-3-15 of this code, to implement the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

(c) A provisionally licensed social worker may become a licensed social worker by completing the following:

(1) Be continuously employed for four years as a social worker and supervised. The board shall promulgate by legislative rule the supervision requirements;

(2) Complete 12 credit hours of core social work study from a program accredited by the council on social work education, as defined by legislative rule, within the four-year provisional license period;

(3) Complete continuing education as required by legislative rule; and

(4) Pass an examination approved by the board.

(d) On or before July 1, 2020, the Legislative Auditor shall cause to be performed a performance audit of the provisional license to practice as a social worker application process and the application process by which a provisional licensee may become a licensed social worker.

(e) Any employee of the Department of Health and Human Resources with a provisional license as of the effective date of this section who opted to take the department-provided courses previously allowed has until June 30, 2022, to convert his or her license to a social work license or provisional license under this section. If the individual cannot or desires not to complete this process, he or she shall be eligible for registration as provided in §30-30-30 of this code.

#### §30-30-18. Exemptions from this article.

The following persons are exempt from licensure, unless specifically stated in writing by the employer:

(1) A person employed as the director or administrative head of a social service agency or division, or applicants for employment to be licensed;

(2) Licensed or qualified members of other professions, such as physicians, psychologists, lawyers, counselors, clergy, educators, or the general public engaged in social work-like activities, from doing social work consistent with their training if they do not hold themselves out to the public by a title or description incorporating the words "licensed social worker" or "licensed clinical social worker" or a variation thereof;

(3) An employer from performing social work-like activities performed solely for the benefit of employees;

(4) Activities and services of a student, intern, or resident in social work pursuing a course of study at an accredited university or college, or working in a generally recognized training center, if the activities and services constitute a part of the supervised course of study; and

(5) Pending disposition of the application for a license, activities and services by a person who has recently become a resident of this state, has applied for a license within 90 days of taking up residency in this state, and is licensed to perform the activities and services in the state of former residence.

(6) An individual registered pursuant to §30-30-30 of this code.

#### §30-30-30. Registration as a Bureau for Children and Families service worker.

To be eligible to be registered as a service worker for the Bureau for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Resources, the applicant must:

(1) Submit an application to the board;

(2) Be at least 18 years of age;

(3) Have a baccalaureate degree;

(4) Have obtained employment by the bureau;

(5) Satisfy the requirements of the West Virginia Clearance for Access: Registry and Employment Screening Act provided in §16-49-1 et seq. of this code;

(6) Satisfy the requirements provided in §30-1-24 of this code;

(7) Complete 240 hours of pre-service training developed by the bureau;

(8) Complete 20 hours of board-approved continuing social work education every two years, up to 10 of which may be earned through board-approved online education hours: Provided, That at least two of the hours shall be related to the Code of Ethics adopted by the board, and at least two hours shall be related to social, health, and mental health concerns of veterans and their families; and

(9) Pay the application fee.

The following has special meaning:  
green underline denotes added text  
~~red struck out text denotes deleted text~~

**2021 AK H 193**

**Author:** Gillham  
**Version:** Introduced  
**Version Date:** 04/28/2021

**HOUSE BILL NO. 193**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

**"An Act establishing a license and temporary license for an associate social worker; relating to the exemption of certain persons from licensure as social workers; and relating to the reinstatement of lapsed social worker licenses."**

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

\* **Section 1.** AS 08.95.010(a) is amended to read:

(a) There is created the Board of Social Work Examiners composed of five members, as follows: one member licensed under this chapter as an associate social worker; one member licensed under this chapter as a baccalaureate social worker; one member licensed under this chapter as a master social worker; one member ~~TWO MEMBERS~~ licensed under this chapter as a clinical social worker ~~WORKERS~~; and one public member who has never been licensed under this chapter. At least one of the licensed members must be a person who is not an employee of a federal, state, or local government.

\* **Sec. 2.** AS 08.95.100(b) is amended to read:

(b) A person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if the person is not licensed

(1) under this chapter and the person, unless exempt from licensure under AS 08.95.911,

(A) uses the title "social worker" or uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "S.W.," "Social Worker," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a social worker;

(B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, holds out as a social worker ~~UNLESS THE PERSON IS EXEMPT FROM LICENSURE UNDER AS 08.95.911;~~

(2) as a clinical social worker under this chapter or has a clinical social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

(A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "L.C.S.W.," "Licensed Clinical Social Worker," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed clinical social worker; or

(B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, holds out as a licensed clinical social worker;

(3) as a master social worker under this chapter or has a master social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

(A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "L.M.S.W.," "Licensed Master Social Worker," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed master social worker; or

(B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, holds out as being a licensed master social worker; ~~OR~~

(4) as a baccalaureate social worker under this chapter or has a baccalaureate social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

(A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "L.B.S.W.," "Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed baccalaureate social worker; or

(B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, holds out as being a licensed baccalaureate social worker; or

(5) as an associate social worker under this chapter or has an associate social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

(A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or letters "L.A.S.W.," "Licensed Associate Social Worker," or other letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed associate social worker; or

(B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by implication, holds out as being a licensed associate social worker.

\* **Sec. 3.** AS 08.95.110 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(d) The board shall issue a license authorizing use of the title "associate social worker" to a person who

(1) satisfies the requirements of (a)(3) - (5) and (7) of this section;

(2) has

(A) received an associate degree in social work from a college or university approved by the board; or

(B) received a professional certificate of human services or social work from a college or university approved by the board and has provided evidence of a combination of related paraprofessional experience working in a role supporting the delivery of social or human services; and

(3) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for associate social worker licensing.

\* **Sec. 4.** AS 08.95.125(a) is amended to read:

(a) On receipt of a completed application for a social worker license, a request for a temporary license, and payment of the application fee and temporary license fee determined under AS 08.01.065(c), the board, a member of the board, or an employee of the department designated by the board may issue a temporary license

(1) to use the title "master social worker" to an individual who

(A) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.110(a)(1) and (3); or

(B) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.120(a)(2) and (4) and provides a photocopy, together with a sworn statement as to the copy's veracity, of the applicant's current license as a master social worker in another jurisdiction;

(2) to use the title "baccalaureate social worker" to an individual who

(A) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.110(a)(3) and (c)(2); or

(B) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.120(a)(2) and (4) and provides a photocopy, together with a sworn statement as to the copy's veracity, of the applicant's current license as a baccalaureate social worker in another jurisdiction;

(3) to use the title "associate social worker" to an individual who (A) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.110(a)(3) and (d)(2); or

(B) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.120(a)(2) and (4) and provides a photocopy, together with a sworn statement as to the copy's veracity, of the applicant's current license as an associate social worker in another jurisdiction.

\* **Sec. 5.** AS 08.95.125(b) is amended to read:

(b) A temporary license provided to an applicant under (a)(1)(A), (2)(A), or (3)(A) ~~(a)(1)(A) OR (a)(2)(A)~~ of this section is valid for one year and is valid notwithstanding the applicant's failure to satisfactorily complete the examination required under AS 08.95.110(a)(6) during the period that the license is valid.

\* **Sec. 6.** AS 08.95.125(c) is amended to read:

(c) A temporary license issued under (a)(1)(B), (2)(B), or (3)(B) ~~(a)(1)(B) OR (a)(2)(B)~~ of this section is valid for one year.

\* **Sec. 7.** AS 08.95.911 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(d) The exemption under (a) of this section does not apply to a person who obtains a social worker license under this chapter or a person who obtained a social worker license under this chapter that has lapsed or has been suspended or revoked.

\* **Sec. 8.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

TRANSITION: LAPSED LICENSE. (a) Notwithstanding AS 08.95.911(d), enacted by sec. 7 of this Act, a person who wishes to continue to use the title "social worker," who qualifies for the exemption under AS 08.95.911 as it read on the day before the effective date of sec. 7 of this Act and who has a social worker license that was issued under AS 08.95 that has lapsed, may

(1) apply to the Board of Social Work Examiners to reinstate the lapsed license; an application submitted under this paragraph must be received within one year after the effective date of this section;

(2) continue to use the title "social worker" under the exemption in AS 08.95.911 as it read on the day before the effective date of sec. 7 of this Act until the later of the date the Board of Social Work Examiners issues a decision on the person's reinstatement application submitted under (1) of this subsection or one year after the effective date of this section.

(b) The Board of Social Work Examiners shall reinstate

(1) a permanent master social worker license for an applicant under (a)(1) of this section who meets the requirements for a temporary license to practice social work under AS 08.95.125(a)(1);

(2) a permanent baccalaureate social worker license for an applicant under (a)(1) of this section who meets the requirements for a temporary license to practice social work under AS 08.95.125(a)(2).