Getting Licensed in South Carolina

Each state has different requirements for social work licensure. If you plan on practicing outside of South Carolina after graduation, please look up the licensure information for the state to which you’re moving.

In South Carolina, upon receiving an MSW a student may be licensed as a LMSW. Many social work positions, particularly practice positions, require the LMSW. Requirements for the LMSW can be found at [http://www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/socialworkers/SWAPPS/LMSWReq.pdf](http://www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/socialworkers/SWAPPS/LMSWReq.pdf)

Basically, to get a LMSW a student who is receiving their MSW must take the licensure exam; they can do this as early as the spring semester of their final year, however you won’t actually get your license until the licensing board receives your final MSW transcript. NO SPECIFIC COURSES ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE LMSW EXAM, though content related to the DSM will be on the exam so some students find taking Psychopathology helpful (others have passed the exam with taking Psychopathology and just use a licensure exam study guide). Information about the exam can be found at the ASWB web site [www.ASWB.org](http://www.awsb.org) and an outline of the content for the MSW exam (from that web site) is attached to this document.

Two years post-graduation, if students have received clinical supervision and engaged in practice that meets criteria (see Licensing Board web site for specifics), they may sit for the LISW-CP (for clinical practice) or LISW-AP (for administrative practice) exam. The LISW-CP is the license for social workers who wish to engage in independent clinical practice. To sit for this exam, in addition to supervision and hours, social workers must have taken 3 university credit hours of Psychopathology, 3 university credit hours of Psychodiagnosics, and 1 university credit hour (or 20 continuing education hours) of Ethics. If they have taken these courses during their MSW these hours will count towards their license, or they may take these classes after graduation. Several institutions in addition to the COSW offer these classes.

To take the LMSW exam:

Spring semester, send an email to Student Services asking the office to send out a letter to the Licensing Board in the Dean’s name saying that you are expecting to graduate in May.

Request an official transcript from the registrar’s office. Have it sent to

    LLR, South Carolina Board of Social Work Examiners
    P.O. Box 11329
    Columbia, SC 29211-1329

Go on line (South Carolina Board of Social Work Examiners [http://www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/socialworkers/SWAPPS/LMSWApp.pdf](http://www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/socialworkers/SWAPPS/LMSWApp.pdf)) and fill out an application on their web site. There will be a fee (currently $45).

You will then receive notification from the Board that you are eligible. When you receive approval letter, you must then contact the Association of Social Work Boards to register for the Master’s level examination. Go on line to ASWB [http://www.aswb.org/exam-candidates/exam-registration/](http://www.aswb.org/exam-candidates/exam-registration/)
This site has a link to a handbook that gives you information on registering for the exam and lots of other information about the process for registering. The fee for registration is currently $230.00. Once your registration is complete, ASWB will email you an authorization to schedule a test appointment. After you have registered and paid the examination fee, you are eligible to purchase access to an on-line practice test. The fee for this test is $85.00

The ASWB will contact you on the date and location of the exam.

OUTLINE OF LMSW EXAM CONTENT FROM ASWB WEB SITE

A note on the DSM. The fifth edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders was published in May 2013 and supersedes the DSM-IV-TR. The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is always committed to providing sufficient information to social work candidates to prepare for ASWB examinations. No content related to DSM-5 will appear on the exams until July 2015. The current ASWB examinations reflect the content contained in the DSM-IV-TR. Current ASWB study guides and practice exams are up to date for candidates planning to take the exam before the new DSM content is put on the exams in July 2015. New study materials reflecting the DSM-5 are in development, and they will be available in early 2015.

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 28%

I.A. THEORIES AND MODELS This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Developmental theories
- Systems theories
- Family theories
- Group theories
- Psychodynamic theories
- Behavioral, cognitive, and learning theories
- Community development theories
- Person in environment
- Addiction theories and concepts
- Communication theories
- Defense mechanisms
- Normal and abnormal behavior
- Indicators of normal physical growth and development
- Adult development
- Effects of life crises
- Impact of stress, trauma, and violence
- Emotional development
- Sexual development
- Aging processes
- Family life cycle
- Family dynamics and functioning
- Cognitive development
- Social development
- Child development
• Basic human needs
• Adolescent development
• Human genetics
• Gender roles
• Impact of environment on individuals
• Impact of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities on human development
• Interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors
• Effects of family dynamics on individuals
• Dynamics of grief and loss
• Impact of economic changes on client systems
• Effects of body image on self and relationships
• Cultural, racial, and ethnic identity development
• Strengths perspective

I.B. ABUSE AND NEGLECT This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Abuse and neglect concepts
• Indicators and dynamics of sexual abuse
• Indicators and dynamics of psychological abuse and neglect
• Indicators and dynamics of physical abuse and neglect
• Characteristics of abuse perpetrators
• Indicators and dynamics of exploitation

I.C. DIVERSITY, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC JUSTICE, AND OPPRESSION This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Influence of culture, race, and/or ethnicity on behaviors and attitudes
• Influence of sexual orientation and/or gender identity on behavior and attitudes
• Influence of disability on behaviors and attitudes
• Effects of differences in values
• Impact of cultural heritage on self-image
• Impact of spirituality and/or religious beliefs on behaviors and attitudes
• Effects of discrimination
• Systemic (institutionalized) discrimination
• Professional commitment to promoting justice
• Impact of social institutions on society
• Impact of diversity in styles of communicating
• Influence of age on behaviors and attitudes
II. ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PLANNING  24%

II.A. BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AND COLLATERAL DATA This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Psychopharmacology
- Components of a biopsychosocial history
- Components of a sexual history
- Common prescription medications
- Components of a family history
- Basic medical terminology
- Symptoms of mental and emotional illness
- Symptoms of neurologic and organic processes
- Indicators of sexual dysfunction
- Indicators of psychosocial stress
- Indicators of traumatic stress and violence
- Indicators of substance abuse and other addictions

II.B. USE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Use of collateral sources to obtain relevant information
- Methods used to evaluate collateral information
- Process used in problem identification
- Methods used to assess the client’s communication skills
- Use of observation
- Methods of involving clients in identifying problems
- Indicators of client’s strengths and challenges
- Use of assessment/diagnostic instruments in practice
- Methods used to organize information
- Current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual diagnostic framework and criteria
- Components and function of the mental status examination
- Process of social work assessment/diagnosis
- Methods used in assessing ego strengths
- Methods used to assess community strengths and challenges
- Methods used in risk assessment
- Indicators of client danger to self and others
- Indicators of motivation and resistance
- Methods used to identify service needs of clients
- Use of interviewing techniques
- Process of assessing the client’s needed level of care
II.C. INTERVENTION PLANNING This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Factors used in determining the client’s readiness/ability to participate in services
- Criteria used in selecting intervention modalities
- Components of an intervention or service plan
- Human development considerations in the creation of an intervention plan
- Methods used to develop an intervention plan
- Techniques used to establish measurable intervention or service plans
- Methods used to involve clients in intervention planning
- Methods for planning interventions with groups
- Methods for planning interventions with organizations and communities
- Cultural considerations in the creation of an intervention plan

III. DIRECT AND INDIRECT PRACTICE 21%

III.A. DIRECT/MICRO This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Client advocacy
- Empowerment process
- Methods used in working with involuntary clients
- Psychosocial approach
- Components of the problem-solving process
- Crisis intervention approach
- Task centered practice
- Short-term interventions
- Methods used to provide educational services to clients
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Use of case management
- Techniques used to evaluate a client’s progress
- Use of contracting and goal-setting with client systems
- Use of timing in intervention
- Phases of intervention
- Indicators of client readiness for termination
- Techniques used for follow-up in social work practice
- Use of active listening skills
- Techniques used to motivate clients
- Techniques used to teach skills to clients
- Use and effects of out-of-home placement
- Methods used to develop behavioral objectives
- Client self-monitoring techniques
- Technique of role play
- Assertiveness training
- Role modeling techniques
- Limit setting
- Methods used to develop learning objectives with clients
- Models of intervention with families
- Couples intervention/treatment approaches
• Interventions with groups
• Techniques for working with individuals within the group context
• Use of expertise from other disciplines
• Approaches used in consultation
• Processes of interdisciplinary collaboration
• Methods used to coordinate services among service providers
• Multidisciplinary team approach
• Case recording and record-keeping
• Methods used to facilitate communication
• Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
• Techniques that explore underlying meanings of communication
• Methods used to obtain/provide feedback
• Methods used to interpret and communicate policies and procedures
• Methods used to clarify the benefits and limitations of resources with clients
• Use of case recording for practice evaluation or supervision
• Use of single-subject designs in practice
• Evaluation of practice
• Interpreting and applying research findings to practice
• Process used to refer clients for services
• Use of cognitive behavioral techniques
• Culturally competent social work practice

III.B. INDIRECT/MACRO This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Applying concepts of organizational theories
• Impact of social welfare legislation on social work practice
• Methods used to establish service networks or community resources
• Techniques for mobilizing community participation
• Techniques of social planning methods
• Techniques of social policy analysis
• Techniques to influence social policy
• Techniques of working with large groups
• Use of networking
• Approaches to culturally competent practice with organizations and communities
• Advocacy with communities and organizations
• Impact of agency policy and function on service delivery

IV. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, VALUES, AND ETHICS  27%

IV.A. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICAL ISSUES This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Professional values and ethics
• Client self-determination
• Intrinsic worth and value of the individual
• Client’s right to refuse service
• Ethical issues regarding termination
• Bioethical issues
• Identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas
• Applying ethics to practice Issues
• Responsibility to seek supervision
• Use of professional development to improve practice
• Professional boundaries

IV.B. CONFIDENTIALITY This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Legal and ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic communication
• Use of client records
• Ethical and legal issues regarding mandatory reporting
• Obtaining informed consent

IV.C. SOCIAL WORKER ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

• Social worker-client relationship patterns
• Concept of empathy
• Process of engagement in social work practice
• Concept of a helping relationship
• Principles of relationship building
• Professional objectivity in the social worker-client relationship
• Concepts of transference and countertransference
• Use of the social worker-client relationship as an intervention tool
• Social worker-client relationships in work with communities and organizations
• Social worker-client relationships in work with small groups
• Methods used to clarify roles of the social worker
• Social worker’s roles in the problem-solving process
• Client’s roles in the problem-solving process
• Influence of the social worker’s values on the social worker-client relationship
• Dual relationships
• Influence of cultural diversity on the social worker-client relationship