



Social Work Licensure Guidance Document

Position

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences strongly encourages its Social Work students and graduates to obtain licensure. The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) explains that the “purpose of licensing and certification in social work is to assist the public through identification of standards for the safe professional practice of social work” (ASWB, 2018). Licensure identifies an individual’s level of education, social work experience, and dedication to the ethical standards of the profession. Social work education includes practice with systems of all sizes; MSSA graduates gain employment in various micro, mezzo, and macro areas including hospitals, schools, communities, government, private practices, prisons, research institutes, and mental health and substance abuse facilities. We urge students in both MSSA concentrations (Direct Practice and Community Practice for Social Change) to apply for the licensing exam in whichever state they expect to seek employment. Students are responsible for researching their scope of practice in the state in which they intend to practice and are expected to operate within the scope and requirements set forth by their state. Whether focused on clinical intervention or community practice, excellence can be demonstrated through licensure (Fink-Samnick, 2016). Social Workers are essential in addressing complex social problems, intervening at all systems levels, and engaging in policy debates (Donaldson, et al, 2014). Identifying as a Licensed Social Worker establishes credibility with other licensed professionals, which increases inter-professional collaboration and provide a means of advocating for the profession and protecting the public (Monahan, 2014 and Cruikshanks, et al, 2017).

Process

There are many career paths for MSSA graduates; some require licensure while others may not. For some students, applying for licensure is the natural next step towards a career as a Social Worker. For others, the decision to sit for the exam is more complex. When contemplating licensure, we recommend the following for our students:

- Research the region where you want to live and work;
- Take the long view - while your current position may not require licensure, an opportunity may present itself where a license is either required or preferred;
- A license affords you the flexibility of identifying both with your specialty and your degree;
- Consider the adage: It is better to have and not need, than to need and not have.

State Licensure Guidance Document

Generally, the licensure process involves, fulfilling any and all course requirements, submitting an application, providing school transcripts, passing a state background check, and passing an exam administered by the ASWB. Most states have several different levels of licensure.

Steps to Licensure

1. Identify the state where you plan to work and review their licensure requirements. The ASWB maintains information related to each state's rules and regulations here: <https://www.aswb.org/licensees/about-licensing-and-regulation/social-work-regulation/>;
2. Take some time to review the state's exam and application requirements -- be sure to apply for or take the appropriate exam.
3. Determine when you can start the application process. Some states require that official transcripts with the degree title and date of conferral be included in the application to sit for the exam. Other states will accept an official letter from the Dean or Registrar in lieu of an official transcript submitted with the application. Please note, however, that in most instances, an official license will not be issued without an official transcript.

Resources

- LEAP Exam Prep Course <https://case.edu/socialwork/resources-for-students/state-licensure>.

The Mandel School suggests that students interested in beginning the licensure process register for the LEAP prep course. This prep course is designed to help students prepare for the Masters-level examination. The sessions are open to students in all formats. Registration includes a live session or online course, the LEAP Comprehensive Study Guide with Practice Questions, and a pre- and post-test exam.

- [Association of Social Work Boards](#)

The mission of the ASWB is “to strengthen protection of the public by providing support and services to the social work regulatory community to advance safe, competent and ethical practices”. The ASWB creates the social work licensing exams for all states. Visit their website for more information about licensure in your state. The ASWB also produces an Exam Candidate Handbook that can be found at <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Candidate-Handbook.pdf>.

- [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#)

The CSWE provides accreditation for social work education. In social work, licensure requires a degree from an accredited institution.

CITATIONS

Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). About Licensing and Regulation. Retrieved September 14, 2018 from <https://www.aswb.org/licensees/about-licensing-and-regulation/>

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