

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

LICENSURE

QUESTION: What is the licensure bill?

ANSWER: Act 80 replaces clinical certification with licensure for independent clinical social workers. Effective November 1, 2002, independent clinical social workers (CICSW) are now licensed clinical social workers (LCSW)

QUESTION: What is the difference between certification and licensure?

ANSWER: Certification provides only title protection, whereas licensure provides practice protection as well as title protection.

QUESTION: What is meant by practice protection?

ANSWER: Act 80 prohibits, with certain exceptions, a person from practicing clinical social work, marriage and family therapy or professional counseling unless he or she is licensed.

QUESTION: What are the exceptions to Act 80?

ANSWER: 1. Persons certified as advanced practice and independent social workers who practice psychotherapy under the supervision of persons licensed under the bill

2. Persons who practice psychotherapy within the scope of practice of other state or federal licenses and

3. Mental health professionals employed by outpatient psychotherapy clinics certified by the department of health and family services (DHFS).

QUESTION: What is the definition of clinical social work?

ANSWER: ...providing services for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders in individuals, families and groups, to restore, maintain and enhance social functioning through treatment interventions that include psychosocial evaluation, counseling of individuals, families or groups, referral to community resources, advocacy, facilitation of organizational change to meet social needs, and individual, marital or group psychotherapy

QUESTION: What is the definition of psychotherapy?

ANSWER: ...the diagnosis and treatment of mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, conditions, or addictions through the application of methods derived from established psychological or systemic principles for the purpose of assisting people in modifying their behaviors, cognitions, emotions, and other personal characteristics, which may include the purpose of understanding unconscious processes or intrapersonal, interpersonal or psychosocial dynamics.

QUESTION: What are the requirements to obtain clinical social work licensure?

ANSWER:

1. Masters degree in Social Work from an accredited program
2. Certification as an Advanced Practice or Independent Social Worker
3. Clinical field placement in graduate school
4. Clinical concentration in graduate school
5. 3,000 hours of supervised practice in no less than 2 years, including at least 1,000 hours of face-to-face contact and including DSM diagnosis and treatment of individuals.
6. Passage of the clinical level national exam

QUESTION: Do you need to be certified as an Advanced Practice or Independent Social Worker in order to accrue your 3,000 hours?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION: How do you define clinical field placement?

ANSWER: Supervised clinical field training must be in a primary clinical setting and must include at least two semesters of field placement or a one-semester block placement where more than 50% of the practice is to assess and treat interpersonal and intra-psychoic issues in direct contact with individuals, families or small groups.

QUESTION: Please define clinical social work concentration?

ANSWER: Clinical social work concentration means a course of study with a primary focus on resolving intra-psychoic and interpersonal problems by means of direct contact with clients at the individual, small group and family level. To qualify as a master's or doctoral degree in social work with a concentration in clinical social work, the course of study must include one course in psychopathology and social work and from among the following, 2 theory and practice courses:

1. Case management
2. Psychopathology in social work
3. Clinical assessment and treatment of specific populations and problems (e.g. children, adolescent, elderly, alcohol and drug abuse, family or couples relationships)
4. Psychopharmacology
5. Psychotherapeutic interventions
6. Electives such as family therapy, social work with groups, sex or gender related issues and topics

QUESTION: If you did not have a clinical course of studies or field placement in graduate school, can you still become a clinical social worker?

ANSWER: Yes, in 2004 the Wisconsin Legislature passed Act 301, which allows an individual to fulfill a clinical social work concentration in postgraduate studies and to substitute a specific number of hours of supervised clinical social work experience for the supervised clinical field training.

QUESTION: What is the postgraduate studies requirement?

ANSWER: It is the same as the rules for clinical concentration: one course in Psychopathology in social work and two additional courses from the other five categories.

QUESTION: What is the supervised field training requirement in Act 301?

ANSWER: The rules for Act 301 substitute 1500 hours of supervised clinical training including 500

hours of face-to-face contact in place of the clinical field training in graduate school. This clinical training would be in addition to the 3,000 hours of supervised clinical training, including 1,000 hours of face-to-face contact that is currently required to qualify to take the exam as a licensed clinical social worker.

QUESTION: What are the requirements for supervision?

ANSWER: For clinical social workers Act 80 requires that the experience must be supervised by one of the following:

1. A licensed clinical social worker with a doctorate degree in social work
2. A licensed clinical social worker with a master's degree in social work
3. A licensed clinical social worker who has engaged in the equivalent of 5 years of full-time clinical social work
4. A psychiatrist or psychologist
5. Another individual approved in advance by the Social Workers section.

QUESTION: What type of information will I need to provide to the Department of Safety and Professional Services when I apply for Licensed Clinical Social Worker status?

ANSWER: The following documents are required in order to process your application for a licensed clinical worker:

1. Application Form
2. Fee
3. Addendum (Social Security Number)
4. Certificate of professional education (after graduation)
5. Convictions and Pending Charges form (if applicable)
6. Wis. Stats. & rules exam if not taken within last five years
7. Transcript for master's or higher degree program
8. Transcript for any post-graduate coursework
9. Course descriptions (if not from UW Milwaukee or Madison)
10. Page 2 complete information on supervision
11. Supervised clinical field training (Form #2561)
12. Documentation of post-graduate clinical experience
13. Verification of Credential Form (if out of state credential)

QUESTION: If my field placement was in direct service, does this automatically count as a clinical field placement?

ANSWER: No. You need to make sure that your field placement fits within the definition of clinical field placement as defined above.

QUESTION: How can I be sure that my field placement will qualify as clinical when I want to apply at a later date to be a licensed clinical social worker?

ANSWER: The MSW programs at U W Madison, U W Milwaukee, UW Eau Claire/Madison, Carthage College-Loyola MSW, George Williams College at Aurora University and UW Green Bay/Oshkosh should be able to advise you what field placements qualify as clinical.

QUESTION: As a licensed clinical social worker am I required to obtain malpractice insurance?

ANSWER: Unless you practice as an employee of a federal, state or local governmental agency, you must obtain malpractice insurance in order to practice clinical social work.

QUESTION: How much malpractice insurance must I obtain?

ANSWER: \$1,000,000 for each occurrence and \$3,000,000 for all occurrences in a year.

QUESTION: If my employer has malpractice insurance covering me, do I still have to obtain my own malpractice insurance?

ANSWER: No, but NASW's Insurance Trust Department has always recommended that practitioners carry their own malpractice insurance in addition to any malpractice insurance carried by the agency.

QUESTION: I read in the NASW WI newsletter that an agreement was reached on the provision of AODA counseling by clinical social workers. Under this agreement as a licensed clinical social worker, can I treat clients with alcohol or substance abuse?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION: Under this agreement, as a licensed clinical social worker, can I treat clients with alcohol or substance dependency?

ANSWER: In order to treat clients with alcohol or substance dependency, a licensed clinical social worker would need either AODA certification through the Department of Safety and Professional Services or an AODA specialty classification through the Examining Board.

QUESTION: Are there any other situations where a licensed clinical social worker would need to either obtain AODA certification or the AODA specialty classification through the Examining Board?

ANSWER: Yes. A licensed clinical social worker would need to obtain AODA certification or the AODA specialty classification through the Examining Board if the licensed clinical social worker is treating the AODA dependence for a dually diagnosed individual, if their job title is AODA counselor, if they represent themselves as an AODA specialist or if their job description indicates they are an AODA specialist.

QUESTION: How can a licensed clinical social worker qualify for the AODA specialty classification through the Examining Board?

ANSWER: In order to qualify for this specialty classification, the LCSW must meet the following criteria:

1. Successful passage of the ICRC written counselor certification examination
2. At least 1,000 hours of face-to-face counseling experience with individuals diagnosed with substance use disorder (which can either be the same or separate from the hours of initial licensure) and
3. At least 180 contact hours of AODA-specific education, including at least 45 hours of education in psychopharmacology, across four knowledge domains, further defined in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services technical assistance public series number 21 (TAP-21)

QUESTION: How can I apply for this specialty classification?

ANSWER: You need to contact the Department of Safety and Professional Services and ask them for an application.

QUESTION: If I am a licensed clinical social worker and do not have either AODA certification or the AODA specialty classification, can I prepare someone with substance dependence for AODA treatment and work with recovery issues when an individual has completed AODA treatment?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTIONS: Can clinical social workers provide psychometric testing?

ANSWER: Clinical social workers can provide psychometric testing if they meet the requirements of MPSW 1.11. For more information go to the following URL:
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/rsb/code/mpsw/mpsw001.pdf>

CERTIFICATION

QUESTION: Who is required to be certified in the State of Wisconsin?

ANSWER: Those individuals who wish to call themselves a "social worker" or work under the title "social worker". In addition to basic level social workers, or CSW's, this includes advanced practice social workers (CAPSW), and independent social workers (CISW). Individuals who wish to practice and call themselves clinical social worker must obtain licensure as discussed under the licensure section above.

QUESTION: If the title of my job is human services worker and I don't call myself a social worker, am I required to be certified?

ANSWER: No

QUESTION: What if I have just obtained my MSW degree and plan to work towards the clinical social work licensure? If my title is not social worker do I need to obtain the Advanced Practice Social Worker Certification in order to provide psychotherapy or clinical services under supervision?

ANSWER: Yes, you are now required to obtain a CAPSW or CISW credential in order to accumulate any hours towards your LCSW. .

QUESTION: Are there any reasons to obtain social work certification if your title is not "social worker" and you are not providing psychotherapy?

ANSWER: Yes. Clients of social workers certified in Wisconsin have privileged communication, which offers some protection for the confidentiality of your records. Secondly, SFC 20, the conduct code governing social workers certified in Wisconsin also protects the confidentiality of your records by defining as "unprofessional conduct" (10) "Revealing facts, data, information, records or communication received from a client in a professional capacity" except under certain specified circumstances. Third, certification permits you to put the initials CSW, CAPSW, or CISW (depending upon your certification category) behind your name, which indicates that you have met minimal state standards for the profession. Finally you will be eligible for a job with the title "social worker" if you decide to change jobs.

QUESTION: What are the social work certification categories in Wisconsin?

ANSWER: Wisconsin certifies social workers in three categories: Certified Social Worker for individuals with a Bachelors degree in Social Work from an accredited program; Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker for individuals with a Masters degree in Social Work from an accredited program and Certified Independent Social Worker for individuals with a masters degree in social work from an accredited program and two years (3000 hours) of post-masters supervised experience.

QUESTION: Can you become certified without a social work degree?

ANSWER: Yes. A social work training certificate exists that allows individuals with bachelor degrees in Sociology, Psychology, Criminal Justice or other Human Services fields approved by the Social Workers Section to obtain a two year non-renewable social work training certificate that would

allow them to work in a Social Work titled position during that two years. These individuals can take the social work exams to become a Certified Social Worker if they 1) complete five courses relating to social welfare policy and services, human behavior and the social environment and social work practice methods with individuals, families, small groups, communities, organizations and social institutions; AND 2) complete either a human services internship of at least 400 hours involving direct practice with clients supervised by a certified social worker holding either a bachelors or masters degree in social work OR complete one year of social work employment involving direct practice with clients supervised by a certified social worker with a bachelor's or masters degree in social work.

QUESTION: What are the initials used for social work certification in Wisconsin?

ANSWER: Certified Social Worker =CSW, Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker = CAPSW; Certified Independent Social Worker =CISW (As mentioned in the licensure section, licensed clinical social workers hold the credentials, LCSW)

QUESTION: Can I use the initials BSW or MSW (MSSW) without certification?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION: What type of supervision do you need to obtain your CISW?

ANSWER: If you are seeking to obtain your CISW, supervision may be provided by a CISW or LCSW or another individual approved in advance by the Social Workers Section. The supervision must average one hour per week for the two-year period. Group supervision must include no more than 6 individuals in the group.

QUESTION: Do I need to obtain a CAPSW in order to accrue hours towards my CISW?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION: If I am a Certified Social Worker, do I need to change my certification category if I obtain my MSW?

ANSWER: It depends. If you will be providing psychotherapy (under supervision) after obtaining your MSW, you must upgrade your certification to the Advanced Practice Social Worker. It is against the law to provide psychotherapy if your certification level is Certified Social Worker. On the other hand if you are not going to practice psychotherapy, you are not required to upgrade your certification level to the Advance Practice level after obtaining your MSW degree. In addition if you have any intention of upgrading to a CISW, you must obtain a CAPSW in order to accrue any hours towards your CISW.

QUESTION: In situations where I am not required to change my certification status, is it still a good idea to do so?

ANSWER: Each social worker needs to make that determination for herself or himself since you must take an exam and pay a fee if you want to change your certification category.

QUESTION: Are there fees for certification or licensure?

ANSWER: Yes. (NOTE: Fees change every year-check the Department of Regulation & Licensing for the latest fees) Currently the Initial Credential Fee is \$75, the State Law Exam Fee is \$75 and the Contract Exam Fee is \$15 for a total fee of \$165. In addition you can also pay an additional fee of \$10 for a Temporary Certificate or Licensure (clinical social workers). In addition to the \$165 or \$175(with temporary certificate) fee for the application, you will also need to pay \$230 for the national exam for the Certified Social Workers or Advanced Practice Social Worker credential. The

exam for the licensed clinical social worker credential costs \$260. The certification/licensure fee is good for two years on every odd year. (If you become certified or licensed in an even year, you will need to renew your certification or licensure the following year (an odd year) then you will be renewing your certification or licensure every two years.) The renewal fee is \$85 for all categories of social work certification or licensure.

QUESTION: What are the examination requirements to be certified in Wisconsin?

ANSWER: Wisconsin requires the successful passing of two exams in order to be certified: the "national" exam of the Association of Social Work Boards and the "state" exam administered by the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

QUESTION: How do I obtain an application for social work certification or licensure?

ANSWER: You can obtain an application for social work certification or licensure by downloading it from the Department of Safety and Professional Services' web site at <http://drl.wi.gov> or by writing or calling the Department of Safety and Professional Services, State of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 8935, 1400 East Washington Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8935, 608-267-7212.

QUESTION: What is included in the application packet that is sent by the Department of Safety and Professional Services?

ANSWER: The application packet consists of the following items:

1. Information for Social Worker Application
2. Social Worker Application
3. Addendum to application
4. Academic Verification Form (Pre-graduation)
5. Social Workers Certification of Professional Education
6. Supervised Clinical Field Training
7. Documentation of Post-Graduate Clinical Experience-Supervisor's Affidavit
8. Convictions and Pending Charges
9. Verification of Credential
10. Notices
11. State exam and answer sheet.

QUESTION: What is the difference between the two forms, Social Workers Certification of Professional Education and Verification of Credential?

ANSWER: The form entitled, Social Workers Certification of Professional Education is the form that must be sent to the appropriate office at the college where you received your BSW or MSW degree. The applicant must complete the top portion of this form, then the college office needs to fill out the form verifying the date of your degree and return the form to the Department of Safety and Professional Services in Madison. You do not need to provide the transcript of your BSW or MSW degree unless you are applying for the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (official transcript sent directly from the college to the Department). The form, Verification of Credential should only be used if you have been certified as a social worker in another state or in another profession.

QUESTION: Can I submit my application and take the exams before I graduate?

ANSWER: Yes. The Department of Safety and Professional Services accepts applications up to six month prior to graduation. You will still not be officially certified until your school verifies that you have graduated. However you would be able to tell potential employers that you have passed the national exam.

QUESTION: What else do I need to know about the application procedure?

ANSWER: The social workers application needs to be filled out completely and must be notarized. Incomplete or incorrect applications will be returned to the applicant.

QUESTION: What information do I need to take the state exam?

ANSWER: The answers to the questions for the Wisconsin State Statute & Rules exam can be found in the Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code Relating to the Practice of Marriage & Family Therapy, Professional Counseling & Social Work. This code book can be obtained through one of the following ways 1) through the DSPS Website (<http://drl.wi.gov>) 2) purchase a hard copy from the Document Sales Office, or 3) purchase a CD of the codebook through Document Sales.

QUESTION: How can I prepare for the national exams?

ANSWER: To prepare for the national exam, you may wish to review the ASWB study guide on the ASWB website (www.aswb.org) You can also order a written copy of this same study guide for \$30 (plus \$3 or shipping and handling) or obtain a sample test for \$75. ASWB offers study guides at each of the four levels (basic, intermediate, advanced and clinical) which correspond respectively to Wisconsin's four categories of Social Worker, Advanced Practice Social Worker, Independent Social Worker and Independent Clinical Social Worker). To purchase the study guide or sample exam contact ASWB directly at 1-888-579-3926 or 1-800-225-6880 or write ASWB Study Guide, 400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B, Culpeper, VA 22701.

QUESTION: Are there any exam preparation courses available in Wisconsin for the national exam?

ANSWER: Yes, NASW WI offers exam preparations courses at its annual conference and periodically in Milwaukee throughout the year. You can check NASW WI website at www.naswwi.org for the next available exam preparation exam.

QUESTION: What happens if I don't pass the national exam?

ANSWER: If you don't pass the national exam, you will have to retake it and pay another \$230-\$260. You will have to wait at least 90 days before you can retake the exam

QUESTION: Which exam do I take first?

ANSWER: You will first take the state exam, which is an open book on-line exam.

QUESTION: How much time do you have to take the state exam?

ANSWER: You have up to three months to complete the state exam.

QUESTION: When do you take the national exam?

ANSWER: Act 80 allows applicants to take the national exam prior to graduation once you have completed all the other requirements for certification and your school has completed and sent the Academic Verification Form that the applicant is a student in good standing and is within 6 months of graduation. Therefore with the exception of verification of your graduation, when your application is complete, you will be issued an approval letter. One week after you receive your approval letter, you may contact ASWB (an 800 number will be provided) to register to take the national exam. You will also need to pay the exam fee in advance either by credit card, money order or cashiers check payable to the ASWB. ASWB will then send you information on how to contact the exam center to schedule your exam.

QUESTION: What happens at the national test site?

ANSWER: The national exam is computerized. Each question is multiple choice. A tutorial on how

to take the test is given before testing begins. Candidates will have 4 hours for 170 questions. Candidates will know their test scores and pass/fail status before they leave the test site. You should allow two to three weeks for the Department of Safety and Professional Services to receive the information on your exam.

QUESTION: What is the passing grade for the national and state exams?

ANSWER: You will need a score of 70 to pass the national exam and 85 to pass the state exam.

QUESTION: If I wish to apply for a social work titled position but have not yet taken the certification exams, will that prevent me from being hired or considered for the position?

ANSWER: It depends upon the employer. Some employers may be willing to have you start working under a different title other than social worker until you obtain certification. Applicants for certification or licensure can obtain a temporary certificate, which they can keep for up to nine months while they are waiting to take the exam. However you cannot provide psychotherapy in Wisconsin as a social worker unless you are either certified as a CAPSW, CISW or licensed as a LCSW.

QUESTION: If I am certified or licensed in Wisconsin and wish to move to another state can I obtain certification or licensure there without taking the exam?

ANSWER: Each state has its own rules on certification and licensure. If you hold a certification or licensure that is essentially the same as that of another state and if you took the national exam to obtain certification or licensure (as opposed to being "grandfathered" in), you will probably not have to retake the national exam to be certified or licensed in another state. You would still have to pay a fee to that state for certification/licensure.

QUESTION: How can I find out the certification or licensure categories of another state?

ANSWER: You can call the NASW WI office for that information.

QUESTION: If I am certified or licensed in another state and moving to Wisconsin will I automatically be granted reciprocity?

ANSWER: No. A Social Worker certificate or license may be granted by reciprocity if an applicant holds a credential from a state whose requirements are (or were at the time) substantially equivalent to current Wisconsin requirements.

QUESTION: Are reciprocal applicants eligible for the temporary certificate or license?

ANSWER: No

QUESTION: As an applicant for reciprocity in Wisconsin, what documents will I need to submit?

ANSWER: You will be required to submit all the information listed on page 1 of Information for Social Worker Application for the level at which you are applying, plus the following:

1. Verification of credential from any states in which you have been, or are credentialed. Form #1971 must be completed and sent by the credentialing authority of each state directly to the Social Workers Section
2. Verification of passing the ASWB examination (national)-directly from ASWB-if you have not taken this exam you will be required to apply as a new candidates and take the state open book examination and the national examination.
3. Verification of supervisor's credential at the time of supervision.

QUESTION: The certification/licensure application asks if I have ever been convicted of a felony or

misdemeanor. Will this fact prevent me from certification?

ANSWER: Not necessarily. The Social Workers Section is primarily interested in screening out people who have committed offenses that are related to the practice of social work.

QUESTION: Are there any misdemeanors or felonies that are automatically acceptable to the Social Workers Section?

ANSWER: Yes. Student demonstrations from 1960-1975, shoplifting/petty theft, petty larceny more than five years ago, driving while intoxicated (one time incident with no drug or alcohol problems identified where the last previous DWI conviction occurred more than two years prior to application and any court ordered treatment was successfully completed more than two years prior to application) or drug related convictions more than five years ago without reconviction. In addition, on the Convictions and Pending Charges Application Addendum, you do not need to include municipal ordinance violations or traffic offenses, except for convictions for any offenses including alcohol or drug abuse, especially convictions for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated (OWI, DUI, etc.)