



Board of Behavioral Sciences



IMPORTANT ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS


FOR ASSOCIATE CLINICAL
SOCIAL WORKERS



1625 NORTH MARKET BLVD.
SUITE S-200
SACRAMENTO, CA 95834
(916) 574-7830
WWW.BBS.CA.GOV



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
dca
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Revised: 10/2023 | PDE_19-379 



Board of Behavioral Sciences
 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S200, Sacramento, CA 95834
 Telephone: (916) 574-7830
www.bbs.ca.gov



Associate Clinical Social Worker

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised October 30, 2023



The information provided in this publication is supplemental and is intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions for those pursuing licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). The Board's [Statutes and Regulations](#) contain the official legal code sections. The Board encourages you to thoroughly read the *Statutes and Regulations* pertaining to the clinical social work profession.

Not a registered Associate yet? Start here: [Handbook for Future LCSWs](#)

A. ASW REGISTRATION; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

1. What coursework must be completed prior to applying for ASW registration? 1
2. When can my hours begin counting towards the LCSW licensing requirements? 1
3. When can I begin working in a private practice or professional corporation? 2
4. Are there any limitations on working in a private practice or professional corporation? 2
5. Now that my ASW registration has been issued, can I start practicing independently / open my own office? 2
6. When am I required to renew my ASW registration? What must I do to renew? 2

7. When do I need to take the Law and Ethics Exam? What happens if I don't take it in time?	2
8. How do I apply to take the California Law and Ethics Exam?	3
9. What happens if I don't pass the California Law and Ethics Exam?	3
10. What happens if I haven't passed the Law and Ethics Exam by my registration's 6-year time limit?.....	3
11. How do I obtain a second or third (subsequent) ASW registration number and can I count experience gained under a subsequent number?	3
12. Can I work in a private practice or professional corporation under a subsequent ASW registration number?	3
13. What happens once I pass the Law and Ethics Exam?	4

B. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

14. What is the breakdown for the experience required to become a LCSW?	5
15. What is triadic supervision?	6
16. What is the definition of "telehealth counseling"?	7
17. How many telehealth hours can I gain?.....	7
18. How far back can hours of experience be counted? What is the six-year rule?.....	7
19. How do I determine the amount of supervision I need each week?.....	7
20. What is the required ratio of supervision to individual or group psychotherapy hours? ..	7
21. Can I be paid as a 1099 / independent contractor or bill clients directly?	8
22. Can I be employed as a volunteer?	8
23. Who is eligible to supervise ASWs?	8
24. How many supervisees can participate in a session of group supervision?	9
25. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?	9
26. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing or over the telephone?	9
27. What happens if my supervisor is temporarily unavailable to provide supervision?	10
28. Do my supervisor and I have to be employed by the same employer?.....	10
29. Does my supervisor have to be on site?.....	10
30. Where can I find more information about supervision?.....	11

31. What forms do I use to record my experience hours and supervision?	11
32. How do I fill out Experience Verification forms or the Weekly Tracking Log if I have more than one supervisor in the same work setting?.....	12
33. When do I need to send in supervision-related forms?.....	12

C. APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

34. What can cause my file to be closed? What happens when a file is closed?	13
35. What type of employment documentation does the Board require with my Application for Licensure?	13
36. What additional coursework do I need to take prior to submitting an Application for Licensure?	14
37. What is required for the Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention training?	15
38. Is my additional coursework too old?.....	15
39. How can I provide verification of my experience if my supervisor is deceased or incapacitated?.....	16
40. What should I do if my supervisor refuses to sign for my hours?.....	16
41. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my Application for Licensure	16
42. What happens once I submit my Application for Licensure?	17
43. Do I need to maintain a current ASW registration number to participate in the clinical exam?	17
44. Must I continue to have supervision after my experience hours have been approved?	18
45. Once I pass both exams, can I start practicing independently?.....	18

A. ASW REGISTRATION; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

1. What coursework must be completed prior to applying for ASW registration?

All applicants must possess a master's degree in social work from a school of social work that has been accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Applicants with out-of-state education, experience or licensure, who apply for registration as an ASW are required to complete a 12-hour course in California Law and Professional Ethics.

All accredited social work schools in California have notified the Board that the California Law and Ethics requirement has been met by their graduates. No other coursework is required for ASW registration.

Statutes cited: Business and Professions Code (BPC) sections 4996.17, 4996.18 and 4996.17.2

2. When can my hours begin counting towards the LCSW licensing requirements?

This depends on when you applied for ASW registration, as the law changed effective January 1, 2019.

If you applied for ASW registration PRIOR TO January 1, 2019:

Hours of work experience and supervision may only begin counting once your ASW registration number has been issued.

If you applied for ASW registration ON OR AFTER January 1, 2019:

If the Board receives your application for ASW registration within 90 days of your degree award date, and you are thereafter issued an ASW registration, all postdegree hours of supervised experience may be credited. Hours gained under this "90-day rule" must comply with all experience and supervision requirements in order to count toward licensure.

Additional Requirement for Applicants who Graduated on or After January 1, 2020:

Hours may only be accepted under the "90-day-rule" described above IF the hours are obtained at a workplace that, prior to the applicant gaining hours, required live scan fingerprinting. You must provide documentation to the Board from your employer consisting of a copy of the processed "State of California Request for Live Scan Service" form. This form must be submitted with your application for licensure for hours gained between graduation and registration issuance to be accepted. A copy of the processed form is the ONLY acceptable documentation specified in law. There are no exceptions. See the [FAQ](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Applicant/LCSW/Forms/Pubs) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs) about the 90-day rule for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23(b)

3. When can I begin working in a private practice or professional corporation?

4. Are there any limitations on working in a private practice or professional corporation?

You may not work in a private practice or professional corporation until your ASW registration number has been issued by the Board. You may work in private practice or professional corporation for a maximum of six (6) years, until your first ASW registration has met its maximum length. There are no exceptions.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996.23(c) and 4996.28(c)

5. Now that my ASW registration has been issued, can I start practicing independently / open my own office?

No. Independent practice cannot begin until you are issued an LCSW license. Independent practice (or opening your own office) is considered unlicensed practice and is subject to disciplinary action by the Board. You are also prohibited from billing clients directly until you are licensed.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4991.1, 4992.3 and 4996; Regulation cited: Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1881

6. When am I required to renew my ASW registration? What must I do to renew?

Registrations expire annually and have a total six-year time limit. Your registration's expiration date will be printed on your registration certificate. You will be mailed a courtesy renewal notice 90 days prior to your expiration date. The Board encourages renewing online as it takes effect instantly as long as all renewal requirements are met.

To qualify for renewal, you must complete three hours of continuing education in California Law and Ethics during your renewal cycle (the one-year period prior to your registration's expiration date). See the [Registrant Continuing Education Brochure](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Licensee>Continuing Education>Mandatory Coursework) for more information. In addition, if you have not yet passed the LCSW California Law and Ethics exam, you must take it during your renewal cycle to be permitted to renew.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4996.22 and 4996.28

7. When do I need to take the Law and Ethics Exam? What happens if I don't take it in time?

Associates who have not yet passed the LCSW California Law and Ethics Exam **MUST** have taken this exam during their renewal cycle in order to renew. There are no exceptions. **It is critical that you apply to take the exam early in your renewal cycle and schedule your exam well in advance of your expiration date to ensure your ability to renew on time.** If you wait until the last minute to take the exam, you risk

delaying your ability to renew. Your employer is unlikely to allow you to work with an expired registration, and you won't be able to count any experience hours toward licensure during the time your registration lapsed. Exam applications can take up to 6 weeks for processing. The test administrator may not have immediate test dates available, so be sure to allow enough time for scheduling.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4992.09, 4996.23 and 4996.28

8. How do I apply to take or retake the California Law and Ethics Exam?

If you have never applied for the California Law and Ethics exam, submit your INITIAL California Law and Ethics exam application online at www.breeze.ca.gov.

If you failed or were a no show to the California Law and Ethics exam, you can submit the RE-EXAMINATION California Law and Ethics exam application online at www.breeze.ca.gov.

See the [FAQs](#) about the Law and Ethics Exam for more information (access at www.bbs.ca.gov>Exams>LCSW).

9. What happens if I don't pass the California Law and Ethics Exam?

You do not need to pass the exam in order to renew; you just need to have taken it. You may apply to retake the exam after at least 90 days have passed from the date you last took the exam.

Statute cited: BPC section 4992.09; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1805.05

10. What happens if I haven't passed the Law and Ethics Exam by my registration's 6-year time limit?

California law permits a registration to be renewed a maximum of five (5) times before being cancelled. ASWs may apply for a subsequent (second or third) registration number. You cannot be granted a subsequent number unless you have passed the Law and Ethics Exam. There are no exceptions.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4992.09 and 4996.28

11. How do I obtain a second or third (subsequent) ASW registration number and can I count experience gained under a subsequent number?

12. Can I work in a private practice or professional corporation under a subsequent ASW registration number?

Submit the [ASW Subsequent Registration](#) application (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs) with the required fee. Be sure to submit it in advance of your registration's expiration date to allow time for processing and to avoid a lapse in

your registration. You may continue to count hours of experience under your subsequent Associate number; however, your hours may only be up to six years old at the time you apply for licensure, as explained in question [18](#).

Only those who have been issued a first ASW registration number may work in a private practice or professional corporation. An applicant issued a subsequent ASW number cannot work in a private practice or professional corporation. All other work settings are permissible.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.28(c)

13. What happens once I pass the Law and Ethics Exam?

If you are still earning your hours of supervised experience, you will continue as a registrant until you have completed your hours. No further exams are required until you apply for licensure. You may apply for licensure once you have met all education and experience requirements. Upon approval of your *Application for Licensure*, you will be required to take and pass the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical Level Exam. Once you have passed the ASWB exam, you will submit an *Application for Initial License Issuance* and fee.

Statute cited: BPC section 4992.05; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1877.1

B. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

14. What is the breakdown for the experience required to become a LCSW?

California law requires 3,000 hours of supervised post-degree professional experience, including 104 supervised weeks, in order to qualify for LCSW licensure. **An applicant for licensure cannot be approved to sit for the clinical exam without completing both the 3,000 hours of experience and the 104 required supervised weeks.**

3,000 Hours of Supervised Experience

Breakdown of Requirements

Category	Minimum or Maximum
Clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling	Minimum 2,000 hours (no maximum)
Face-to-face individual or group psychotherapy provided in the context of clinical social work services	Minimum 750 hours (of the above 2,000 – no maximum)
Client-centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, research, workshops, seminars, training sessions or conferences, and direct supervisor contact	Maximum 1,000 hours
Supervision by an LCSW	Minimum 1,700 hours and 13 weeks (no maximum)
Supervision by a Licensed Educational Psychologist	Maximum 1,200 hours (see question 23 for other restrictions)
Supervision by any other type of qualified licensed mental health professional	As long as 1,700 hours are gained under an LCSW, there are no other minimums or maximums

104 “Supervised Weeks”

Breakdown of Requirements

A “supervised week” means a week in which an Associate meets with a supervisor for one 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision or two 2 hours of group supervision

Supervision Amount and Type	Minimum
One (1) hour of Individual or Triadic supervision per week	52 weeks
One (1) hour of Individual or Triadic supervision by an LCSW per week	13 weeks (of the above 52)

**14. What is the breakdown for the experience required to become a LCSW?
(continued)**

104 “Supervised Weeks”

Breakdown of Requirements (continued)

WEEKLY MINIMUMS AND MAXIMUMS	
Category	Minimum or Maximum
Supervision required weekly in each work setting	Minimum one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision.
Supervision required within each week that experience is claimed	Minimum one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision.
Additional supervision required weekly in each work setting (supervision ratios)	If more than 10 hours of “direct clinical counseling” is performed in a setting, then one (1) additional hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) additional hours of group supervision is required during that week (see question 20 for more information on supervision ratios). <i>“Direct clinical counseling” is defined as clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling.</i>
Experience hours credited weekly	A maximum of 40 hours of experience may be credited in any 7 consecutive days between all settings toward licensure.
Supervision hours credited weekly	A maximum of six (6) hours of individual, triadic, or group supervision in any week may be credited toward licensure.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996.23 and 4996.23.1; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1874

15. What is triadic supervision?

Triadic supervision is defined as face-to-face supervision consisting of one supervisor and two supervisees. It is counted under the law as equivalent to individual supervision.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1(b)(2)

16. What is the definition of “telehealth counseling”?

17. How many telehealth hours can I gain?

Telehealth refers to the mode of delivering health care services and public health via information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient’s health care while the patient is at the originating site and the health care provider is at a distant site. Supervisees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the “Standards of Practice for Telehealth,” available in the Board’s [Statutes and Regulations](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant and scroll to the bottom of the page). There is no limit on the number of telehealth hours that can be counted toward the supervised experience requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 2290.5 and 4996.23; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815.5

18. How far back can hours of experience be counted? What is the six-year rule?

The Board cannot accept hours of experience older than six (6) years from the date the Board receives your *Application for Licensure*. The law does not allow the Board to grant exceptions.

For example, the Board receives an *Application for Licensure* on 4/27/2022. The Board can only accept hours earned by this applicant (under all ASW numbers) between 4/27/2016 and 4/27/2022 if all other requirements are met.

It is important to note that if your *Application for Licensure* is closed (also known as abandonment), you will be required to re-apply. Your six-year period will be recalculated to six years back from the date your new application is received, so it is important that you understand how the actions you take could result in file closure/abandonment. For more information on file closure/abandonment, see question [34](#).

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23

19. How do I determine the amount of supervision I need each week?

20. What is the required ratio of supervision to individual or group psychotherapy hours?

“One unit” of supervision = one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision.

Supervisees are required to obtain one (1) unit of supervision, as defined above, during any week in which experience is gained in each setting.

If the supervisee provides more than 10 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week in a work setting, the supervisee must receive a total of two (2) units of supervision in that same week in that setting. “Direct clinical counseling” is defined as

clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling.

EXAMPLE #1: A supervisee works one job and provides 25 hours of direct clinical counseling in a single week. This applicant must receive two (2) units of supervision during this week.

EXAMPLE #2: A supervisee works two jobs, and provides 12 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A and nine (9) hours of direct clinical counseling at Job B during the same week. This supervisee must receive a total of three (3) units of supervision during that week - two (2) units at Job A and one (1) unit at Job B.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1

21. Can I be paid as a 1099 / independent contractor or bill clients directly?

22. Can I be employed as a volunteer?

You must be either a paid W-2 employee or a volunteer employee. You also may not bill clients directly. There are limited circumstances under which you may be paid under a 1099. If you work as a volunteer and receive reimbursement for expenses actually incurred, receiving a 1099 for those reimbursements is acceptable.

If you have received a stipend or educational loan repayment from a program designed to encourage demographically underrepresented groups to enter the profession, or to improve recruitment and retention in underserved regions or settings, a 1099 for the stipend or loan repayment is acceptable. Those paid under a 1099 may be audited by the Board to ensure the payment was for one of the above purposes.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.2(g), (h) and (i)

23. Who is eligible to supervise ASWs?

Only licensed mental health professionals may supervise ASWs, as follows:

- LCSWs
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT)
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCC)
- Licensed Clinical Psychologists
- Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP) (*Note: LEPs may only supervise up to 1,200 hours, which must consist of educationally related mental health services that are consistent with the LEP scope of practice described in [BPC section 4989.14](#)*)
- Licensed Physicians certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

Additionally, the supervisor must meet all of the following requirements:

- Complete the supervisor training and continuing professional development required by law (Licensed Clinical Psychologists and Physicians certified in Psychiatry are exempt from these requirements); and
- Maintain a current and active California license that is not under suspension or probation. (You can check your supervisor's status any time on the Department of Consumer Affairs License Search [here](#)); and
- Have been licensed in California or any other state for at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision; and
- Have practiced psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision (or, if an LEP, has provided psychological counseling pursuant to [BPC section 4989.14](#)); **OR**
- Have provided direct supervision to ASWs, Associate Professional Clinical Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) Trainees, and/or Associate MFTs who perform psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision. Supervision of psychotherapy performed by a student (social work intern or a professional clinical counselor trainee) shall be accepted if the supervision performed is substantially equivalent to the supervision required for registrants.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4989.14 and 4996.20

24. How many supervisees can participate in a session of group supervision?

Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision, even if there are two (2) or more supervisors present. Group supervisors must ensure that the amount and degree of supervision is appropriate for each supervisee.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1(b)(3)

25. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?

Group supervision can be broken into one-hour sessions, as long as both increments (full two hours) are provided in the same week as the experience being claimed.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1(b)(3)

26. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing or over the telephone?

You may be able to obtain supervision via live two-way videoconferencing if your supervisor determines that it is appropriate to do so. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the client confidentiality is preserved. For more information see the [AB](#)

[1758 FAQ](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>Law Changes). Supervision provided over the telephone will not count toward licensure because the law requires supervision to have a face-to-face component.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1

27. What happens if my supervisor is temporarily unavailable to provide supervision?

Alternative supervision must be arranged. The substitute supervisor must meet all regular supervisor qualifications. In addition:

- The substitute supervisor must sign your weekly log.
- You and the substitute supervisor must sign a *Supervision Agreement*.
- The substitute supervisor and your employer must sign a *Written Oversight Agreement* if one is required.

If the substitute is supervising you for MORE than 30 consecutive calendar days:

- A new supervisory plan is also required, and
- The substitute supervisor must sign an *Experience Verification* form for hours earned under their supervision.

If the substitute is supervising you for 30 consecutive calendar days or LESS:

- A new supervisory plan is not required.
- Your regular supervisor may sign an *Experience Verification* form that includes the experience gained under the substitute.

Regulation cited: 16 CCR section 1870.3

28. Do my supervisor and I have to be employed by the same employer?

29. Does my supervisor have to be on site?

If the registered associate will be working in a private practice or professional corporation, the supervisor must (1) be employed by or contracted by the associate's employer, or be an owner of the practice, and (2) either provide psychotherapeutic services to clients for the associate's employer or have a written contract with the associate's employer that provides the supervisor with the same access to the associate's clinical records as is provided to employees of the associate's employer.

In any work setting, if the supervisor is not employed by the supervisee's employer or is a volunteer, a written oversight agreement that addresses the supervisor's and employer's responsibilities must be signed by the supervisor and the employer prior to commencement of supervision. Please see the Board's [website](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs) for a sample written oversight agreement.

In any setting, supervisees may only perform services at the places where their employers permit business to be conducted, which may include performing services at other locations, so long as the services are performed in compliance with the laws pertaining to supervision.

Whether a supervisor is required to be on site depends on the situation. Supervisors must consider their responsibilities as defined in LCSW law, which includes taking responsibility for, and control of, the quality of clinical social work services being provided. Among other responsibilities, supervisors are required to do all of the following, whether they are on site or off site:

- Ensure that the extent, kind and quality of clinical social work performed by the supervisee is consistent with the training and experience of the supervisee.
- Monitor and evaluate the supervisee's assessment, diagnosis and treatment decisions and providing regular feedback.
- Monitor and evaluate the ability of the supervisee to provide services at the site(s) where he or she will be practicing and to the particular clientele being served.
- Monitor and address clinical dynamics, including, but not limited to, countertransference-, intrapsychic-, interpersonal-, or trauma-related issues that may affect the supervisory or the practitioner-patient relationship.
- Ensure compliance with all laws governing the practice of clinical social work.
- Review the supervisee's progress notes, process notes, and other patient treatment records, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.
- With the client's written consent, providing direct observation or review of audio or video recordings of the supervisee's counseling or therapy, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

Upon request by the Board, a supervisor is required to provide the Board with documentation that verifies the supervisor's compliance with all requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996.20 and 4996.23.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1870

30. Where can I find more information about supervision?

Please see the [Guide to Supervision for ASWs](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs)

31. What forms do I use to record my experience hours and supervision?

While gaining your hours of experience, use the following forms, available on the Board's [website](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs):

- *Experience Verification*: This form is completed upon the termination of your supervised experience with your supervisor, and must indicate the total hours completed in each category under your supervisor, your supervisor's license

information and certain information about your employer. Your supervisor will sign the form and provide you with the original for submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

- Weekly Log: Log your hours on this form on a weekly basis and have your supervisor sign weekly. You will retain the original logs.

For Supervisory Relationships that Commenced BEFORE January 1, 2022:

- Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an ASW: Your supervisor must have signed this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.
- Supervisory Plan: Your supervisor must have signed this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

For Supervisory Relationships that Commenced ON OR AFTER January 1, 2022:

Supervision Agreement: You and your supervisor must sign this form, which includes a collaboratively developed Supervisory Plan, within 60 days of commencing supervision. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

Submission of forms as directed in the licensure application instructions will lessen the possibility that the licensing evaluator will need to request additional information from you, thus delaying the approval of your application.

32. How do I fill out *Experience Verification* forms or the *Weekly Tracking Log* if I have more than one supervisor in the same work setting?

If you are receiving supervision from two individuals in one employment setting, the board recommends that you record all hours under your primary supervisor, with one exception. Any actual **supervision hours** that you received under your secondary supervisor must be recorded and signed for by your secondary supervisor on separate weekly logs and a separate *Experience Verification* form (your primary supervisor is not permitted to sign for supervision hours provided by another supervisor). However, all of your **work experience hours** in that setting may be recorded and signed for by your primary supervisor. Recording your experience in this manner will lessen the probability that the Board will need to request additional information from you when reviewing your *Application for Licensure*.

33. When do I need to send in supervision-related forms?

All supervision-related forms must be submitted with your *Application for Licensure*. Do not submit your weekly logs unless requested by the Board.

C. APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

34. What can cause my file to be closed? What happens when a file is closed?

File closure (also known as abandonment) could have major consequences, such as losing experience hours that are too old. Once a file is closed, an applicant may reapply, but must pay a new application fee and meet all current requirements. One of those requirements is that your hours are less than six (6) years old.

If your *Application for Licensure* is closed (abandoned), you would lose any hours of experience that are more than six (6) years old, based on the date the Board receives the new *Application for Licensure*. See question [18](#) for more information about the six (6)-year rule.

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1806, an application shall be deemed abandoned, and the file closed, in any of the following circumstances:

- Applicant does not submit the remaining documents or information requested in the application deficiency letter within one (1) year from the date of the deficiency letter;
- Applicant does not complete the application within one (1) year after filing;
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not sit for an examination within one (1) year after being notified of initial eligibility to take the examination;
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not take an examination within one (1) year from the date the applicant was notified of failing an examination; or,
- The applicant fails to pay the initial license fee within one (1) year after notification by the Board of successful completion of LCSW requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

35. What type of employment documentation does the Board require with my *Application for Licensure*?

If a Paid Employee: You must provide a copy of your W-2 for each year of paid employment in each work setting, for all tax years during which you gained experience, with your *Application for Licensure*. If your W-2 is not available, you must obtain a duplicate W-2, which may be obtained from your employer. It is also available from the Social Security Administration or Internal Revenue Service for a fee (allow for processing time). No other types of documents will be accepted in place of a W-2, with one exception for the current tax year, where you will need to include a photocopy of your most recent pay stub. Originals are not required - photocopies are acceptable.

If a Volunteer Employee: You must provide a letter from your employer verifying your status as a volunteer with your *Application for Licensure*. A sample letter verifying volunteer status is available on the Board's [website](#) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs). Note: The letter from your employer must either be on the employer's letterhead or via email from your employer from a verifiable email address.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.2

36. What additional coursework do I need to take prior to submitting an Application for Licensure?

In addition to possessing a master’s degree in social work from an accredited school of social work, an applicant must complete specific courses prior to submitting an [Application for Licensure](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Applicant/LCSW/Forms/Pubs) (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs).

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
1. Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention	Those submitting an application on or after January 1, 2021 <i>(applicants before this date - will be required upon license renewal).</i>	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	See BPC section 4996.27
2. Provision of Mental Health Services via Telehealth	Those submitting an application on or after July 1, 2023 <i>(applicants before this date - will be required upon license renewal).</i>	3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPC section 4996.27.1 • Must include law and ethics related to telehealth
3. Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California	All applicants	7 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPC section 28 • Course must be based on California law
4. Human Sexuality	All applicants	10 hours	See BPC sections 25 and 4996.17.2 and 16CCR section 1807
5. Alcoholism and Chemical Substance Abuse & Dependency	All applicants	15 hours	See BPC section 4996.17.2 and 16CCR section 1807.3
6. Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse	Applicants who entered a MSW program after 1/1/2004	10 hours	See BPC sections 4996.17.2 and 4996.25
7. California Law and Ethics	Applicants with an OUT-OF-STATE degree	12 hours	See BPC section 4996.17.2(d)(2)(F)
8. California Cultures and Socioeconomic Position	Applicants with an OUT-OF-STATE degree	15 hours	See BPC section 4996.17.2(d)(2)(G)

Continued on next page

**ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR LICENSURE
(continued)**

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
9. Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection, and Intervention	Applicants with an OUT-OF-STATE degree	15 hours	See BPC section 4996.17.2(d)(2)(D)
10. Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection, and Intervention	All IN-STATE applicants EXCEPT for those who entered a MSW program prior to 01/01/1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific number of hours for those who entered a MSW program prior to 12/31/03, but must be of sufficient length to cover the topics of assessment, detection and intervention • 15 hours for those who entered a MSW program after 1/1/2004 	BPC section 4996.2(f)

37. What is required for the Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention training?

This training, as described above, may be taken as a course; or, if this content was included within your supervised experience and you can obtain a written certification from the program’s director of training, or from your primary supervisor stating that the training was included within your supervised experience, it may be accepted in lieu of a course.

If this content was included within your qualifying degree program, you will need to obtain a written certification from the registrar or training director of your school or program stating that this coursework was included within the curriculum required for graduation, or within the coursework that was completed by you. Otherwise, this requirement may be met by taking a six-hour course from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), or a Board-accepted continuing education provider.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.27

38. Is my additional coursework too old?

Coursework may have been taken at any time in the past.

39. How can I provide verification of my experience if my supervisor is deceased or incapacitated?

The Board will review documentation on a case-by-case basis in order to make a determination. However, we recommend that you submit all of the following:

- Evidence that your supervisor is deceased or incapacitated. For example: A copy of an obituary or death certificate if deceased; a doctor's note, letter of conservatorship, or letter from the employer if incapacitated.
- All supervision documentation which had previously been signed by the supervisor, including:
 - The previously signed *Supervisor Responsibility Statement* or *Supervision Agreement*;
 - The previously signed *Supervisory Plan*; and
 - The previously signed *Weekly Log* forms.
- Documentation from the employer verifying employment of the supervisor and supervisee. A letter from the employer will suffice. Other documentation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The written oversight agreement if your supervisor was not employed by your employer.

Note: Any letter from your employer must either be on the employer's letterhead or via email from your employer from a verifiable email address.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996.23, 4996.23.2 and 4996.23.3; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1815.8 and 1869

40. What should I do if my supervisor refuses to sign for my hours?

The first step is to contact your supervisor and inform them that they are obligated by law to sign for hours that you completed. The law (reference below) states, "A supervisor shall give at least one (1) week's prior written notice to a supervisee of the supervisor's intent not to sign for any further hours of experience for such person. A supervisor who has not provided such notice shall sign for hours of experience obtained in good faith where such supervisor actually provided the required supervision." If the supervisor continues to refuse to sign for your hours, you may then file a complaint with the Board. You may file your complaint electronically at www.breeze.ca.gov.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1821

41. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my Application for Licensure

Applicants do not need to resubmit fingerprints if one or more of the following is true at the time the Board receives the application:

- Applicant still possesses a current ASW registration number.

- Applicant has an ASW number that has been cancelled for less than 30 days.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815

42. What happens once I submit my *Application for Licensure*?

The Board will evaluate your application and notify you either that:

- There are one or more deficiencies in your application. You will have one (1) year from the date of the initial deficiency notice to clear all deficiencies. If you do not clear your deficiencies within one year, your file will be closed (see question [34](#) for implications of file closure/abandonment).

OR

- You have been found eligible for examination, and will be provided with information on how to register.

Once you pass both required exams: Download the [Request for Initial License Issuance](#) form (go to www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs), and submit it with the required fee. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

43. Do I need to maintain a current ASW registration number to participate in the clinical exam?

The Board encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue recording experience hours until licensed as an LCSW, as a safeguard in the event that some of the hours submitted are unable to be accepted by the Board either now or in the future due to application closure/abandonment and/or the “six-year rule” (see question [34](#) for more information).

Whether you are required by law to maintain a registration, however, will depend on the type of setting you are working in. If you are working in a non-exempt setting, you are required to maintain a current Associate registration until your LCSW license has been issued. If you are working in an exempt setting (an institution that is both non-profit and charitable, a school or a governmental entity), you are not required to maintain a registration. However, your employer may require it as a condition of employment.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996.14, 4996.14.2 and 4996.23. Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

44. Must I continue to have supervision after my experience hours have been approved?

Once the required number of experience hours are gained, you must receive a minimum of one hour of direct supervisor contact per week for each practice setting in which direct clinical counseling is performed. Once the required number of experience hours are gained, further supervision for nonclinical practice shall be at the supervisor's discretion.

Statute cited: BPC section 4996.23.1(h)

45. Once I pass both exams, can I start practicing independently?

No. A successful examinee still must submit a [Request for Initial License Issuance](#) form (access at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LCSW>Forms/Pubs) and fee before the Board will issue a LCSW license. Submit this form and fee upon completion of all licensure requirements– do not submit sooner as it will be rejected. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt. Independent practice cannot begin until the Board issues a license. Otherwise it is considered unlicensed practice, which is subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4996 and 4996.3