

# GUIDE TO LCSW OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

For Applications Submitted on or After  
January 1, 2020

## Applicant Type

- I have held a license as a Clinical Social Worker in another United States jurisdiction for at least two years.
- The license I hold is current, and has been active and unrestricted for at least two years immediately before the date I submit my application to the Board.
- The license I hold is at the highest level for independent clinical practice in that jurisdiction.
- The degree that qualified me for this license is a master's degree obtained from a school or department of social work that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

**If YES, go to Path A (LICENSURE BY CREDENTIAL)**

**If NO, → Skip to Path B (LICENSURE BY EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE)**

## **Path A – LICENSURE BY CREDENTIAL**

Applicants who qualify for this path (as specified in Business and Professions Code (BPC) section [4996.17.1](#)) must meet all of the following requirements:

1. **EXAMINATION:** You must pass the California Law and Ethics Examination. You will be eligible to take this exam after your *Application for Licensure* has been approved.
2. **QUALIFYING DEGREE:** The degree that qualified you for licensure in another United States jurisdiction must be a master's degree obtained from a school or department of social work that is accredited by the CSWE.
3. **COURSEWORK:** You must complete the following California-specific coursework. Courses must be taken from a school or department of social work that is accredited by CSWE, a school holding a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), or an acceptable continuing education provider. Undergraduate coursework cannot be accepted.

## Path A – LICENSURE BY CREDENTIAL *(continued)*

REQUIRED CALIFORNIA-SPECIFIC COURSEWORK		
Course	Length	Content Required
<b>California Law and Ethics</b>	12 hours	Instruction must include advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous patients, psychotherapist-patient privilege, recordkeeping, patient access to records, state and federal laws relating to confidentiality of patient health information, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to patients, the application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings, and licensing law and licensing process. See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.1</a> .
<b>California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position</b>	15 hours or 1 semester unit	Instruction must include an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position. See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.1</a> .
<b>Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California</b> <i>(In addition to the course provider types listed above, this may be a course sponsored or offered by a professional association or a local, county or state department of health or mental health)</i>	7 hours	Instruction must include detailed knowledge of the California Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act (CANRA). It must also include assessment and methods of reporting of sexual assault, neglect, severe neglect, general neglect, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, corporal punishment or injury, and abuse in out-of-home care. The training shall also include physical and behavioral indicators of abuse, crisis counseling techniques, community resources, rights and responsibilities of reporting, consequences of failure to report, caring for a child's needs after a report is made, sensitivity to previously abused children and adults, and implications and methods of treatment for children and adults. See <a href="#">BPC sections 28 and 4996.17.1 and Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1807.2</a> .
<b>Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention</b> <i>(Does not need to be California-specific)</i>	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required of those submitting an application for licensure <b>on or after January 1, 2021</b> <i>(otherwise will be required upon license renewal)</i></li> <li>See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.27</a> for details.</li> </ul>

Note: 1 semester unit = 15 hours; 1 quarter unit = 10 hours; 1 semester unit = 1.5 quarter units

## Path B – LICENSURE BY EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Applicants who do not qualify for Path A “Licensure by Credential” must meet the following requirements as specified in Business and Professions Code (BPC) section [4996.17.2](#). This is a summary - see the *Application for Licensure* for more information.

1. **EXAMINATIONS:** You must pass both of the following exams:

- **California Law and Ethics Exam:** You will be eligible to take this exam upon issuance of your Associate registration or upon approval of your *Application for Licensure*.
- **Association of Social Work Boards - Clinical Exam:** If you have already passed this exam, the Board may be able to accept your passing score if:
  - You do not currently hold a license in another state or country, your passing score must be less than seven (7) years old;
  - You currently hold a license or registration in another state or country and the license or registration is active and in good standing at the time of application and is not revoked, suspended, surrendered, denied or otherwise restricted or encumbered, a passing score of any age will be accepted;
  - The Board receives official verification of your passing score from the [Association of Social Work Boards](#). Please follow the instructions in the *Application for Licensure*.

If you have not yet passed the ASWB Clinical Exam, you will be eligible to take it after approval of your *Application for Licensure* and after passing the California Law and Ethics Exam.

2. **SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE:** Your experience must be substantially equivalent to California’s requirements as described below.

- **If you are licensed as an LCSW in another state or country at the highest level for independent clinical practice:** Your requirements will depend on whether you were licensed at the highest level for independent clinical practice in a jurisdiction of the United States vs. another country. It will also depend on how many hours were required for that license by the other state or country, as described below:
  - **If you are licensed in another United States jurisdiction that requires at least 3,000 hours of experience:** You do not need to submit verification of experience.
  - **If you are licensed in another country:** You must submit verification of 3,000 hours of substantially equivalent experience that includes 104 supervised weeks.
  - **If you are licensed in another state or country that requires less than 3,000 hours of experience:** You may make up the deficit using time actively licensed in good standing in another state or country at the rate of 100 hours

## Path B – LICENSURE BY EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

per month licensed at the highest level (up to a maximum of 1,200 hours). You do not need to submit verification of these hours.

If additional hours are needed and will be gained in California, you must first register as an [Associate](#) and comply with all requirements for hours gained in California.

- **All other applicants:** You will need to submit verification of substantially equivalent supervised experience totaling 3,000 hours as described below:
  - Experience must have been supervised by a licensed mental health professional and gained within the six (6) years prior to the Board's receipt of your application.
  - If any experience will be obtained in California, you must first register as an [Associate](#) and comply with all requirements for hours gained in California.
  - If you are not licensed in another state or country at the highest level for independent clinical practice, you must have 104 weeks of supervision.

For questions about supervised **experience** requirements, contact [bbs.lcsw@dca.ca.gov](mailto:bbs.lcsw@dca.ca.gov)

3. **QUALIFYING DEGREE:** You must hold a master's degree from a CSWE-accredited school or department of social work. If your degree was obtained outside of the United States, you must obtain a degree evaluation in accordance with [BPC section 4996.18\(e\)](#).
4. **12-HOUR CALIFORNIA LAW AND ETHICS COURSE:** You must complete a 12-hour course in California Law and Ethics. This course must be completed prior to registration as an Associate (or prior to submitting your *Application for Licensure* if you do not need to apply for Associate registration). See [BPC section 4996.17.2\(d\)\(2\)\(F\)](#) for course content requirements.
5. **ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK:** You must complete coursework in accordance with BPC section 4996.17.2, some of which must be California-specific. See the chart beginning on page 5 for details. If it will take you a significant amount of time to complete your coursework, you may want to consider registering as an [Associate](#) while you are taking the courses as it will allow you to work in California as a clinical social worker under supervision.

The California Law and Ethics course and Additional Coursework listed under #4 and #5 above may be taken from a CSWE accredited school or department of social work, a school with a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the USDE, a school approved by the BPPE, or an acceptable [continuing education](#) provider. Undergraduate coursework cannot be accepted. If you are unsure whether your degree or other coursework qualifies (or is deficient), submit your *Application for Licensure* and fee, and we will provide you with the results of the evaluation. For questions about **educational** requirements, contact [bbs.asw@dca.ca.gov](mailto:bbs.asw@dca.ca.gov)

**ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK**  
**LCSW OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANTS**  
**Path B – LICENSURE BY EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE**

*1 semester unit = 15 hours; 1 quarter unit = 10 hours; 1 semester unit = 1.5 quarter units*

Course	Length	Content Required
a) <b>Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention</b>	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	All applicants submitting an application <b>on or after January 1, 2021</b> (otherwise will be required upon license renewal). See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.27</a>
b) <b>California Law and Ethics</b>	12 hours	See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.2(d)(2)(F)</a> for requirements.
c) <b>Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California</b>	7 hours	Must include detailed knowledge of the California Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act (CANRA). It must also include assessment and methods of reporting of sexual assault, neglect, severe neglect, general neglect, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, corporal punishment or injury, and abuse in out-of-home care. The training shall also include physical and behavioral indicators of abuse, crisis counseling techniques, community resources, rights and responsibilities of reporting, consequences of failure to report, caring for a child's needs after a report is made, sensitivity to previously abused children and adults, and implications and methods of treatment for children and adults. See <a href="#">BPC sections 28 and 4996.17.2</a> and <a href="#">Title 16, California Code of Regulations (16CCR) section 1807.2</a> .
d) <b>Human Sexuality</b>	10 hours	Must include the study of the physiological, psychological, and social cultural variables associated with sexual behavior, gender identity, and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction. See <a href="#">BPC sections 25 and 4996.17.2</a> and <a href="#">16CCR section 1807</a> .
e) <b>Alcoholism / Other Chemical Substance Dependency</b>	15 hours	See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.2</a> and 16CCR section <a href="#">1810</a> .
f) <b>Spousal or Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention</b>	15 hours	Must cover spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection and intervention strategies. See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.2</a> .
g) <b>Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse</b>	10 hours	Must cover aging and long-term care, biological, social, psychological aspects of aging, and instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect. See <a href="#">BPC sections 4996.17.2 and 4996.25</a> .
h) <b>California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position</b>	15 hours or 1 semester unit	Must include an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position. See <a href="#">BPC section 4996.17.2</a> .