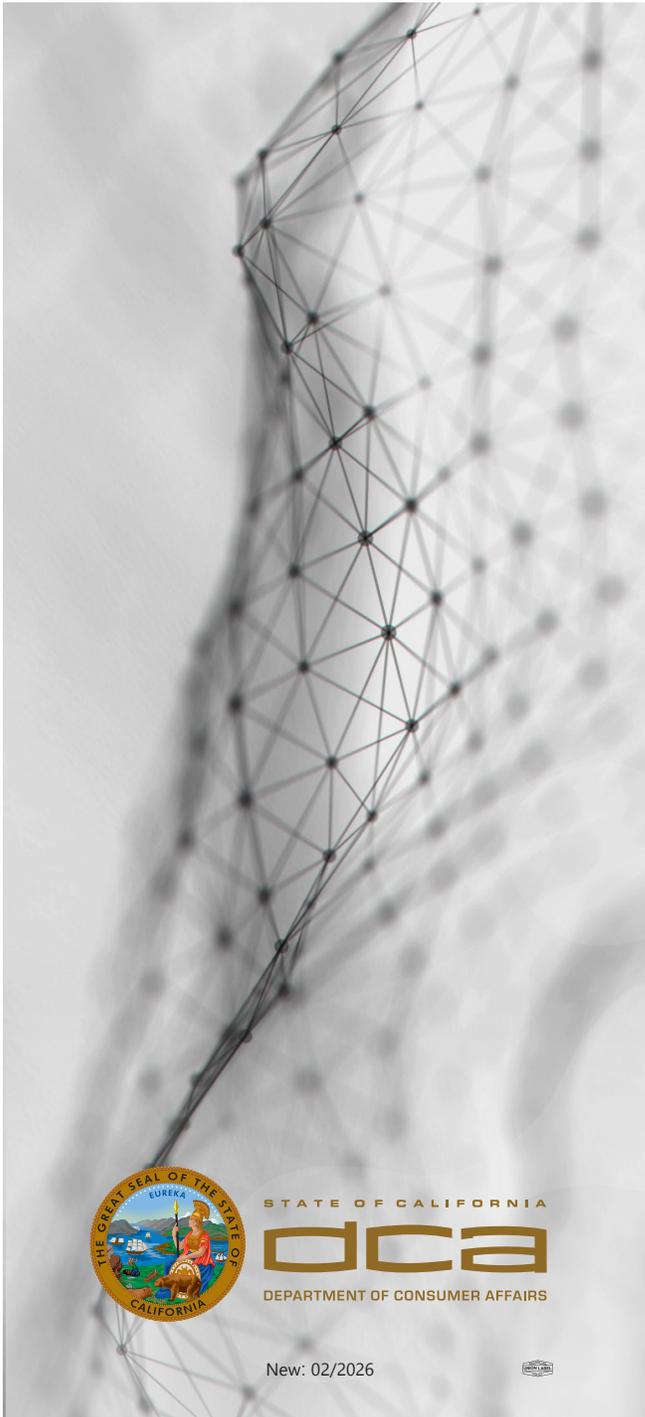




IMPORTANT ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR SUPERVISORS



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
dca
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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The information provided in this publication is supplemental and is intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions for licensees supervising (or are preparing to supervise) an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW), Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT), MFT Trainee, or Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC).

The Board's [Statutes and Regulations](#) contain the official legal code sections (listed on the last page of this document).

Question not answered here? See the Board's [Supervisor Resource](#) page for additional information.

Stay connected and informed about critical updates, resources, and important information on all things related to supervision by signing up for the Board's [email subscriber's list for supervisors](#).

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SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

1. Does the Board offer a supervisor designation or license?

The Board does not issue a “supervisor” license, and once you meet all [minimum requirements for supervisors](#) you can begin supervising. However, supervisors are required to submit a one-time [Supervisor Self-Assessment Report](#) to the Board within 60 days of commencing supervision for the first time in California. Completion of this report helps to ensure that a supervisor meets all qualifications required by law to supervise.

The *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* can be submitted through your [Breeze](#) account.

2. How do I know if I am qualified to be a supervisor?

Please review the [Summary of Supervisor Qualifications](#) to determine whether you meet the qualifications.

3. I have been licensed out of state for at least two years but only recently licensed in California. Do I meet the minimum two-year licensure requirement?

Yes.

4. I am not sure that I meet the requirement for practicing psychotherapy during at least two years out of the last five years. How can I make this determination?

The practice of “psychotherapy” means the provision of direct clinical counseling. The law does not specify how many hours of psychotherapy that you must have provided. However, be aware that as a supervisor, the following are required:

- You are required to be competent in the areas of clinical practice and techniques being supervised;
- You must evaluate assessment, diagnosis, and treatment decisions of the supervisee and provide regular feedback, and
- You are responsible for the control and quality of mental health and related services provided by the supervisee.

You must have enough experience providing psychotherapy in order to adequately meet these responsibilities, as well as all supervisor responsibilities as listed in the [Supervision Agreement](#).

If you are still unsure whether you meet this requirement it is recommended that you contact your professional association for advice.

5. What training am I required to take to become a supervisor? Are there ongoing training requirements? Where can I take these courses?

Please refer to the [Summary of Supervisor Qualifications](#) for information about required initial supervisor training and ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, as well as acceptable course providers.

6. When can I begin supervising?

If you meet the [minimum requirements for supervisors](#), you can begin supervising right away. However, to remain qualified, you are required to submit a *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* to the Board within 60 days of commencing supervision. This is a one-time requirement, it is not required again after the initial submission.

7. I submitted my *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report*. Will I be receiving a certificate in the mail?

No, you will not be issued a certificate as this process is a self-assessment rather than an actual certification. However, if you **mailed** your report, you will receive an automated email back confirming it was received. If you submit **online** via the Breeze system, you may keep a copy of the “application summary” available in Breeze. If you **mailed** in your report you will not receive a confirmation. In this case you may wish to send in your form using a service that provides tracking.

8. What happens if I don't submit the *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* within 60 days of commencing supervision? Will my supervisee be penalized?

The supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action if all supervision requirements specified in law have not been met. If you have missed the deadline, be sure to submit the *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* as soon as possible. Your supervisee will **not** be penalized.

9. How do I demonstrate confirmation of submission of my *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* to a new supervisee or employer?

The options listed in question 7 provide options for confirmation of submission.

10. Do I need to submit the *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report* for each supervisee?

No, as the self-assessment is a one-time requirement. However, you will need to complete and sign a [*Supervision Agreement*](#) with each supervisee.

11. Who can I contact with questions about my *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report*?

For questions regarding the *Supervisor Self-Assessment Report*, please email BBS.SupSelfAssess@dca.ca.gov.

SUPERVISION QUESTIONS

12. What is the maximum number of supervisees that a supervisor is allowed? What types of supervisees count toward this limit?

It depends on the setting, as described below.

Supervisors in Nonexempt Settings*:

Cannot serve as individual or triadic supervisors for more than a total of six persons at any one time who are:

- 1) Receiving supervision for providing clinical mental health services in a nonexempt setting; and
- 2) Not fully licensed at the highest level for independent clinical practice.

This includes, but is not limited to: ASWs, APCCs, AMFTs, MFT Trainees, social work interns, professional clinical counselor trainees, pre-licensees of the Board of Psychology, and applicants working under the Board's 90-day rule.

(Note: Please remember that trainees, social work interns, and applicants under the 90-day rule may not work in a private practice or a professional corporation but are permitted to work in other types of nonexempt settings.)

This limit of six supervisees per supervisor applies across all nonexempt settings in which the supervisor is working, if they work for multiple employers. If a supervisor works in multiple settings, comprising both exempt and nonexempt settings, only the supervisees in the nonexempt settings contribute to the maximum allowable total of six. Group supervisees do not count toward this limit.

Supervisors in Exempt Settings:**

There is no limit on the number of supervisees allowed in an exempt setting. However, it is important to remember that a supervisor must meet their responsibility for, and control of, the quality of services being provided, as well as all other responsibilities specified in law.

***A nonexempt setting** is any setting that does not qualify as an exempt setting, and includes private practices, professional corporations, and any other types of entities that don't meet the definition of an exempt setting.

****An exempt setting** is defined in law as a governmental entity, a school, a college, a university, or an institution that is both nonprofit and charitable.

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

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

14. What is triadic supervision?

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

15. Who counts as a supervisee for purposes of triadic or group supervision?

Anyone receiving supervision for providing clinical mental health services counts toward the maximum of eight in group supervision or the maximum of two in triadic supervision.

Examples include, but are not limited to: ASWs, APCCs, AMFTs, MFT Trainees, social work interns, professional clinical counselor trainees, LMFTs, LPCCs, LCSWs, licensees or pre-licensees of the Board of Psychology, applicants working under the Board's 90-day rule, or individuals providing clinical mental health services without a license or registration in an exempt setting.

16. 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.

17. Can individual or triadic supervision be broken into half-hour increments?

No, the law does not allow for individual or triadic supervision to be conducted for less than one-hour periods.

18. Do I need to be at the same site as my supervisee?

Whether a supervisor is required to be on site depends on the situation. Supervisors must consider their responsibilities as defined in law, which includes taking responsibility for, and control of, the quality of 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 counseling performed by the supervisee is consistent with the education, training and experience of the person being supervised.
- 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.
- Monitoring and addressing 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 LPCC, LCSW or LMFT therapy.
- Reviewing 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.

19. Do I need to be employed by my supervisee's employer?

If the registered Associate will be working in a private practice or professional corporation, the supervisor must:

- Be employed by or contracted by the Associate's employer or be an owner of the practice, and
- 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, the following are required:

- 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](#) for a sample written oversight agreement.

- 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.

20. What is considered a private practice or professional corporation?

“Private practice” means a type of nonexempt setting that meets the following criteria:

- The practice is owned by a licensed health professional either independently or jointly with one or more other licensed health professionals;
- The practice provides clinical mental health services, including psychotherapy, to clients; and,
- One or more licensed health professionals are responsible for the practice and for the services provided and set conditions of client payment or reimbursement for the provision of services.

“Professional corporation” means a type of nonexempt setting and private practice that has been formed pursuant to Part 4 (commencing with [Section 13400](#)) of Division 3 of Title 1 of the California Corporations Code.

21. Can I supervise via videoconferencing or over the telephone?

You may provide supervision via live two-way videoconferencing if you determine that it is appropriate to do so. You must document this determination in your records. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that client confidentiality is preserved. For more information, please refer to the Board’s publication [Planning to Supervise via Videoconferencing?](#)

Supervision provided over the telephone will not count toward licensure because the law requires supervision to have a face-to-face component.

22. If the supervisee is located out-of-state or in another country, can they see clients in California via telehealth?

A California Associate whose registration number is current and active, or an MFT Trainee, can practice with clients located in California while the supervisee is out-of-state or in another country if the supervisor permits it.

For more information, visit the [Telehealth](#) section on the Board’s website.

23. What happens if I am temporarily unavailable to provide supervision?

Alternative supervision must be arranged. The substitute supervisor must meet all of the Board's required supervisor qualifications. In addition:

- The substitute supervisor must sign the supervisee's weekly log.
- The supervisee and the substitute supervisor must sign a *Supervision Agreement*.
- The substitute supervisor and their employer must sign a written oversight agreement if one is required.

If the substitute will be supervising the supervisee 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 will be supervising the supervisee for 30 consecutive calendar days or LESS:

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

SUPERVISING POST-DEGREE EXPERIENCE/ASSOCIATES

24. What does a supervisee need to do in order to count post-degree experience hours immediately after their degree award date (under the “90-day rule”)?

The “90-day rule” allows applicants to count supervised experience gained between their degree award date and the date their associate registration is issued—but **only if** the Board receives the associate application within 90 days of the degree award date AND the applicant retains a copy of their **employer**-required *Request for Live Scan Service* fingerprinting form.

Post degree hours may only be counted as of the date recorded at the bottom of the *Request for Live Scan Service* form completed for the employer. Please see the [90-Day Rule FAQ](#) for more information.

Please make sure your Associate keeps a copy of their *Request for Live Scan Service* form from their employer(s). This is **not** the same Live Scan form that Associates complete for the BBS. Without this form they will not be able to count any hours gained under the 90-day rule.

25. If a student was placed at a practicum or field study site and had a Live Scan prior to graduation, would they need another Live Scan if they are going to continue at that site after they graduate, or would the original livescan suffice?

The original, signed Live Scan form would suffice in that situation.

26. How much supervision am I required to provide an Associate per week?

At least one (1) unit of supervision is required during any week in which experience is gained in each work setting (“*One unit*” of supervision = *one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision*).

If an Associate provides more than 10 hours of direct clinical counseling (recorded in Box A of the *Experience Verification* form) in a single week in a work setting, the Associate must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision for that setting during that week. The law does not require more than two (2) units of supervision in a week in a work setting, even if more than 20 hours of direct clinical counseling is provided.

It is important to note that these are just the **minimums** specified in law, and to consider that the supervisor has the responsibility for, and control of, the quality of mental health and related services provided by the supervisee and must ensure the supervisee’s compliance with the laws and regulations governing practice.

27. Who determines how a supervisee's experience hours are categorized?

The Board is unable to advise regarding which hours can be counted toward a particular category or how they should be applied. Hours are categorized at the discretion of the supervisor, as they are the expert in their field and are overseeing the hours that are being earned. All hours must be earned within the scope of practice of the type of license the supervisee is applying for. If you need further clarification, it is recommended to contact a professional association or legal counsel.

28. Once an Associate submits their application for licensure and their hours are approved do I still need to provide supervision?

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

However, the Board strongly encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue receiving the same amount of supervision as is required to count experience toward licensure (including maintaining a weekly log, etc.) until licensed.

This serves as a safeguard in the event that some of the experience hours the Associate submits are unable to be accepted by the Board. Even if their hours are accepted and they are approved to take the exam, applicants can still lose hours if they don't take the clinical exam within the designated time frame and their hours are more than six years old.

SUPERVISING MFT TRAINEES (PRE-DEGREE HOURS)

29. What is required for MFT Trainees to be allowed to counsel clients? What are the Practicum requirements?

California law requires the activities and services provided by MFT Trainees in their work setting to constitute part of the Trainee's supervised course of study. To meet this requirement, the law specifies that MFT Trainees must be enrolled in a practicum course in order to counsel clients, with one exception if certain requirements are met. Please see the Board's publication regarding [practicum course requirements](#) for details.

30. What type of hours can an MFT Trainee earn?

An MFT Trainee is permitted to earn a maximum of 1,300 hours of overall experience prior to the degree being awarded. Up to 750 hours of counseling (including diagnosing and treating couples, families, and children, and individual or group psychotherapy) and supervision are permitted within the 1,300-hour maximum. The remaining 550 hours may only consist of non-clinical experience.

31. What are the allowable settings for MFT Trainees?

MFT Trainees are prohibited from working in a private practice or professional corporation setting until they have been issued an Associate registration. Trainee work settings must comply with all of the following:

- The school in which the Trainee is enrolled must approve the site and have a written agreement with the site that details each party's responsibilities.
- The setting must lawfully and regularly provide mental health counseling or psychotherapy.
- The setting must provide oversight to ensure that the Trainee's work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements and is within the scope of practice for the profession.

32. How much supervision am I required to provide a MFT Trainee?

At least one (1) unit of supervision is required during any week in which experience is gained in each work setting (*"One unit" of supervision = one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision*).

For every five (5) hours of direct clinical counseling provided in a single week in a work setting, Trainees must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision. Trainees are permitted to average these additional units of supervision over the entire period of time a Trainee works in a particular setting. This means the additional supervision is not required to be provided during that same week.

NOTE: Only the **additional** supervision to meet the 1:5 ratio may be averaged over time. The one (1) unit of supervision that is required during any week must occur within the same week as the experience gained.

It is important to note that these are just the **minimums** specified in law. It is important to keep in mind that the supervisor has the responsibility for, and control of, the quality of mental health and related services provided by the supervisee and is required to ensure the Trainee's compliance with the laws and regulations governing practice.

33. Where can I find more information about supervising MFT Trainees?

Please refer to the [*Frequently Asked Questions for Associate Marriage and Family Therapists and MFT Trainees.*](#)

FORMS AND OTHER REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

34. How long am I required to maintain supervision-related documentation? Can supervisors be audited or disciplined by the Board?

Supervisors are required to maintain documentation that shows they met the supervisor qualifications for at least seven years after they stop supervising. The Board is permitted to audit supervisors to ensure they meet all required supervisor qualifications. Supervisors are required to provide this documentation to the Board if they are audited.

All licensees acting as supervisors need to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the Board's laws related to supervision. Failure to comply is considered unprofessional conduct and may subject the supervisor to disciplinary action.

35. How do I document hours if the supervisee has more than one supervisor in the same work setting?

A supervisor is not permitted to sign for supervision hours provided by another supervisor. When a supervisee has more than one supervisor in the same employment setting (typically an individual or triadic supervisor in addition to a group supervisor), the Board recommends that all experience hours be recorded under their individual or triadic supervisor, with one exception.

Any actual **supervision** hours that they received under the group supervisor must be recorded and signed for by the group supervisor on separate weekly logs and a separate *Experience Verification* form. However, all **work experience** hours in that setting may be recorded and signed for by either supervisor.

Recording the experience in this manner will lessen the probability that the Board will need to request additional information when reviewing the supervisee's application for licensure.

Example: An Associate completed 40 hours of work experience in a week. The individual supervisor provided one hour of individual supervision and the group supervisor provided two hours of group. The individual supervisor will sign for the one hour of supervision they provided, and the group supervisor will sign off on the two hours of group supervision they provided (*Weekly Log* and section B of the *Experience Verification* form). Either supervisor can sign off on the 40 hours of work experience.

36. If I make a mistake on the *Experience Verification* form, can I use white out?

If a mistake is made on the form, you may cross out the item and initial and date the amendments or complete a new form. Do not use white-out on the form as this will cause the form to be rejected.

37. What types of signatures does the Board accept?

Signed documents may be original, scanned, or have an electronic signature.

38. What if I do not feel comfortable signing off on hours for a supervisee?

It is important to be aware that the Board may take disciplinary action on a licensee who helps an applicant obtain a license by fraud, deceit or misrepresentation. While supervisors have a duty under the Board's regulations to sign for experience hours, they supervised that were earned in good faith, supervisors have no obligation to sign for hours they believe are incorrect or suspect.

In such a case, the supervisor may require the supervisee to make corrections to their recorded hours as they deem necessary. The law requires the supervisor to provide the supervisee with written notice, provided to the supervisee at least one week in advance, of their intent not to sign for any further hours. Keep a record of all such requests made to the supervisee in the event they file a complaint so that documentation can be provided to the Board if needed.

39. What forms do I need to fill out for my supervisee?

It is critical that the below forms are signed as required, as applicants can lose their hard-earned experience hours if they are not.

Weekly Log: Supervisees log hours on this form on a weekly basis and ensure that their supervisor signs it weekly. It is critical that the hours are signed for weekly to ensure that hours are not lost due to unforeseen circumstances where the supervisor is not available at a later date to sign.

Supervisees are NOT permitted to sign the weekly logs for the supervisor. The supervisee will retain the original logs once signed. Do not have the supervisee submit weekly logs to the Board except upon request.

Experience Verification: The purpose of this form is to provide verification of the supervisee's hours when applying for licensure. Make sure that the form is completed and signed upon the termination of their supervised experience under your supervision.

The form indicates the total hours completed in each category under your supervision, your license information, and information about the employer. You will sign the form, and the supervisee will provide the originals for submission with their *Application for Licensure*.

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

Supervision Agreement: You and your supervisee must sign this form, which includes a collaboratively developed Supervisory Plan, within 60 days of commencing supervision (if you are providing supervision for less than 60 days it must be signed prior to termination). Have the supervisee retain this agreement for future submission with their *Application for Licensure*.

For Supervisory Relationships that Commenced BEFORE January 1, 2022:

Responsibility Statement for Supervisors: You must have signed this form prior to commencing supervision and provide the supervisee with the original. The supervisee will retain this for future submission with their *Application for Licensure*. Submission of forms as directed in the instructions contained within the *Application for Licensure* will lessen the possibility that the licensing evaluator will need to request additional information from the supervisee, thus delaying the approval of their application.

Also, see question 19 for information about written oversight agreements, which is required when the supervisor is not employed by the supervisee's employer.

40. What happens if the *Supervision Agreement* has not been signed within 60 days prior to the commencement of supervision?

The *Supervision Agreement* would need to be signed immediately and provided to the supervisee. When the supervisee applies for licensure, a letter of explanation may be required. In addition, the supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action.

41. What should I do if a supervisee terminates with a supervisor within 60 days of commencing supervision and the *Supervision Agreement* has not been signed?

The *Supervision Agreement* would need to be signed immediately and provided to the supervisee. If a Supervisory Plan has not yet been developed at that time, the supervisor may note in that section that supervision was terminated prior to 60 days, and that a Supervisory Plan had not yet been finalized.

SUPERVISION LAWS AND RESOURCES

42. What responsibilities do I have as a supervisor in terms of legal requirements?

As a supervisor you are responsible for understanding and complying with the [laws and regulations](#) governing supervision, as well as the experience requirements for licensure. Please review the pertinent supervision laws below, which are applicable based on the type of supervisee. For example, if you are supervising an ASW, refer to the LCSW sections (even if you hold a different license type as the supervisor). You may also want to refer to the FAQs for Associates (links also provided below).

Laws Governing Supervision and Experience Requirements For Licensure

Relevant Code Sections:

Business and Professions Code = BPC

Title 16, California Code of Regulations = 16 CCR

LMFT: BPC sections: 4980.42, 4980.43- 4980.43.5; 16 CCR sections: 1833-1833.2, 1834

LPCC: BPC sections: 4996.46-4999.46.5; 16 CCR sections: 1820, 1821-1821.3

LCSW: BPC sections: 4996.18,4996.20,4996.21, 4996.23-4996.23.3; 16 CCR sections: 1869, 1869.3, 1870-1870.5, 1871

Statutes and Regulations Handbook:

<https://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/lawsregs.pdf>

FAQs for Associates and MFT Trainees:

[FAQs for Associate Clinical Social Workers](#)

[FAQs for Associate Professional Clinical Counselors](#)

[FAQs for Marriage and Family Therapist Trainees and Associates](#)

Stay Informed:

To stay informed of any law updates pertaining to supervisors and supervision please sign up for email alerts at the link below.

<https://www.bbs.ca.gov/webapplications/apps/subscribe/index.html>