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Tracking the LCSW and MFT Licensing Processes: A Current Snapshot of 2002-2004 Graduates - August 21, 2008-

Introduction

In July 2008, staff at the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) analyzed a substantial amount of data relating to the LCSW and MFT licensing process. Staff used a new reporting tool made available by the Department of Consumer Affairs to access and organize various data for all 2002, 2003, and 2004 graduates who registered with the BBS.

This is the BBS' first attempt at accessing and analyzing this data. The information presented in this report provides a variety of statistical information relating to individuals pursuing LCSW and MFT licenses.

Acknowledgements

A number of members of BBS staff contributed in a variety of ways to this report. From answering questions to looking at early drafts, their efforts are valued and worthy of commendation.

Where Are They Now?

Of 2002-2004 graduates, 3,391 registered as Associate Clinical Social Workers (ASW), and 5,494 registered as Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) Interns. Within these two populations, a significant number have yet to earn their license or even apply for examination eligibility. Figures 1 and 2 provide a current snapshot of where 2002-2004 graduates are in the licensing process. The appendix provides a year-by-year breakdown of each graduating class by license type.

Figure 1. LCSW Process Current Snapshot (2002-2004 Graduates)

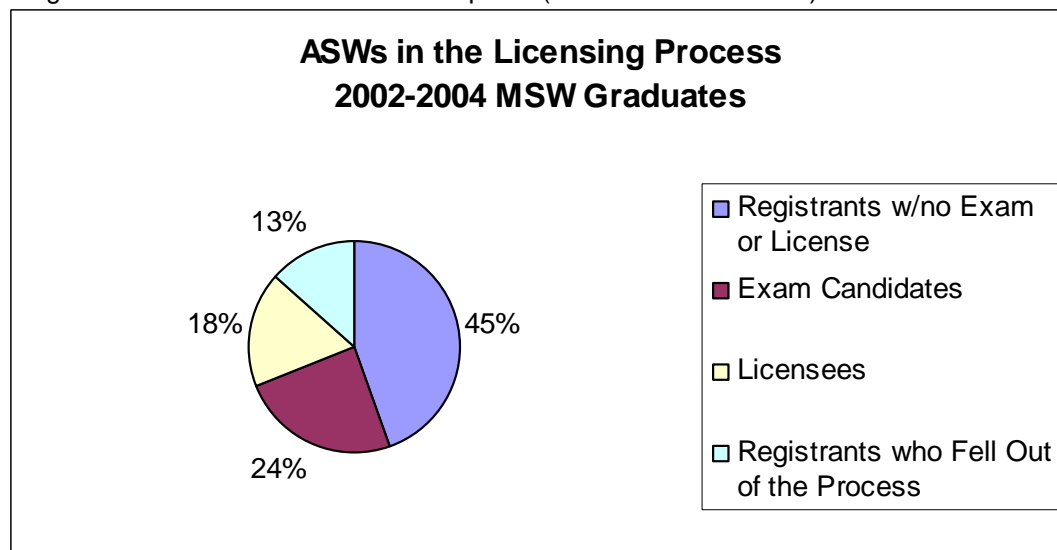
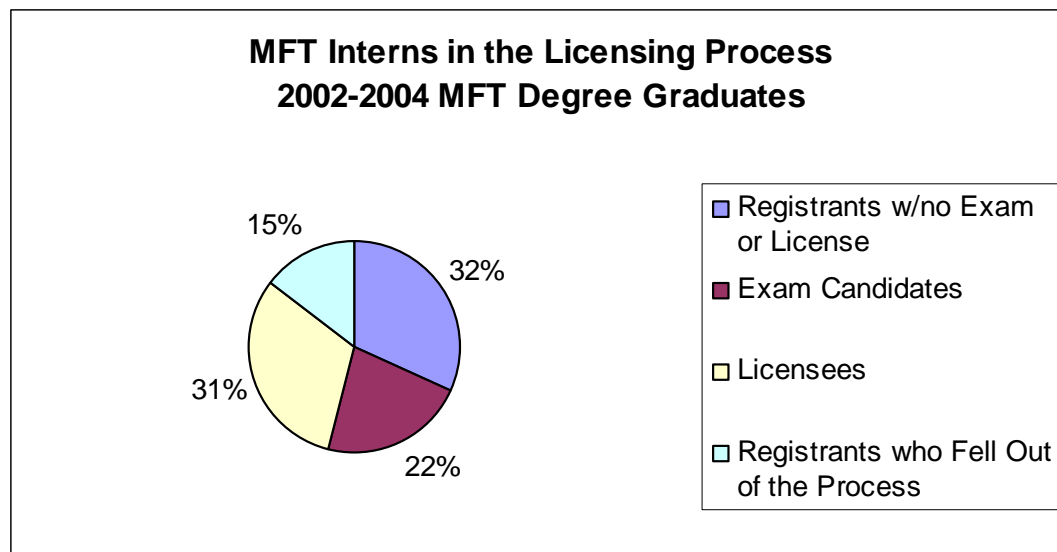


Figure 2. MFT Process Current Snapshot (2002-2004 Graduates)



A quick appraisal of Figures 1 and 2, and the year-by-year breakdowns provided in the appendix, reveals a major trend. Many 2002-2004 graduates pursuing LCSW and MFT licensure have not yet made it to the exam process. The reason for this trend requires further study of these individuals.

A Closer Look at Those Who Register Early

Most 2002-2004 graduates from MSW and MFT degree programs register within a year of degree conferral. 70% of ASWs applied for registration within a year of graduation, and 92% of MFT Interns applied for registration within a year of graduation.

A strong correlation exists between those who apply for registration early and those who have completed the process and earned their license. 93% of all 2002-2004 MSW graduates who have earned an LCSW license applied for ASW registration within a year of degree conferral. Similarly, MFT graduates who registered in less than a year from degree conferral made up 99% of total MFT licensees from the 2002-2004 graduates. Please reference Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the appendix for more statistics broken down by duration between degree conferral and registration application submission.

Year-by-Year Tracking of Licensing Process

A year-by-year breakdown of where registrants are in their respective licensing processes provides an opportunity to observe trend over time and also see where people “fall out” of the process. One consistent trend across all graphs is the increase in individuals getting their license in years “3-4” and “4-5.”

Tables 3, 4, and 5 offer a year-by-year breakdown of where registrants are in the process. Figures 9 through 14 display the data from the tables on area graphs.

Table 6 provides a measure in years of the average period from graduation to license and registration application submission and license. These calculations are only made for licensees within the cohort.

Examination Statistics

In order to receive an LCSW or MFT license, candidates must pass a Standard Written Examination and a Written Clinical Vignette Examination, meaning, at a minimum, a licensee will attempt two examinations.

2002 – 2004 graduates from this data set who earned their license generally took between 2-3 examinations prior to completing the examination process. These examination attempts can be any combination of the Standard Written Examination and the Clinical Vignette Examination. For example, if someone were to pass the Standard Written Examination on his or her first attempt, fail the Written Clinical Vignette Examination, then pass his or her first re-take of the Written Clinical Vignette Examination, that person would have attempted three total examinations prior to receiving his or her license.

While 2-3 examination attempts was the average for licensees in this population, the amount of time actually spent in the examination process ranged from about eight months to a little over a year.

Please refer to Table 7 for more information.

Conclusions

The analysis of this dataset provides both insight and raises additional questions. The information presented in this report is a starting point for future analysis of the Board's licensing processes and populations.

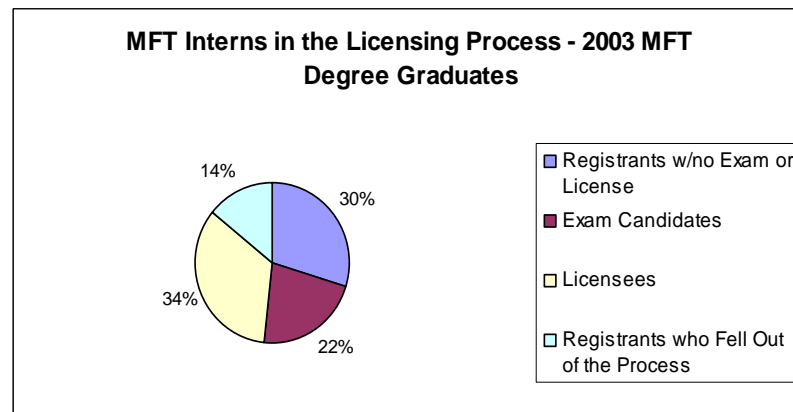
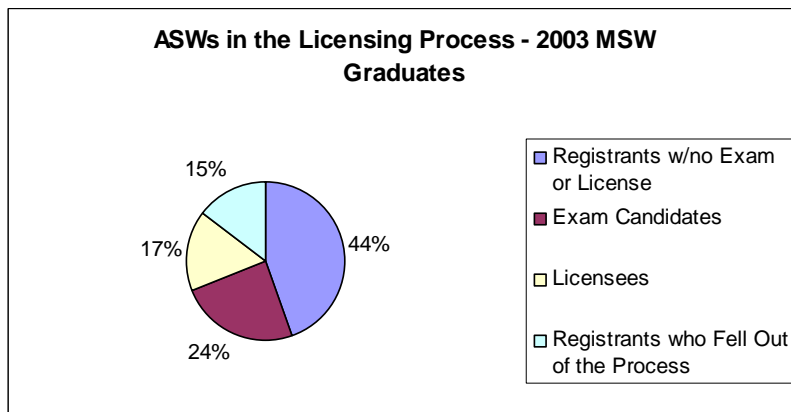
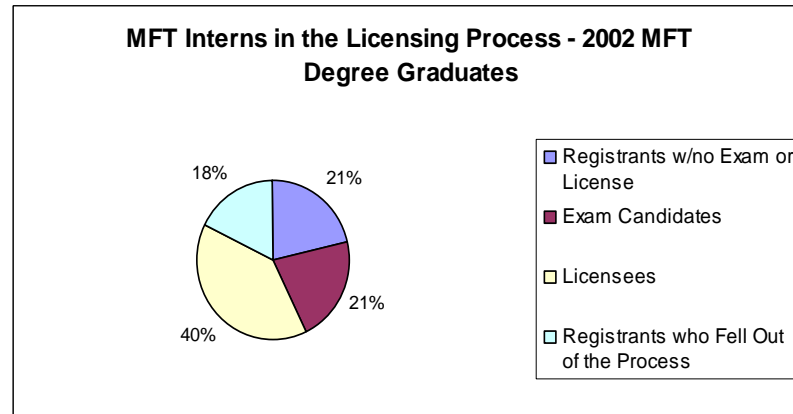
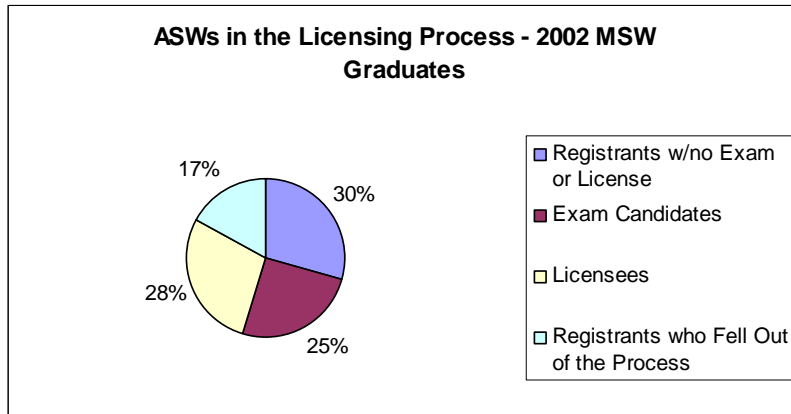
Appendix

Table 1. Breakdown by Year Graduated

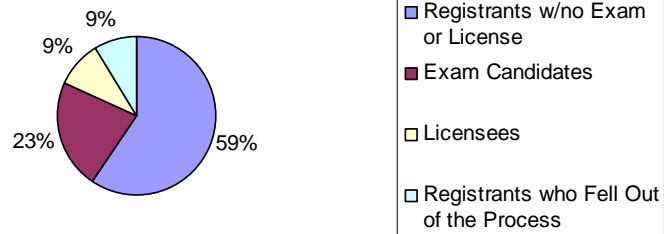
	2002 Graduates				2003 Graduates				2004 Graduates				Totals	
	LCS		MFT		LCS		MFT		LCS		MFT		LCS	MFT
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Obtained Registration	1080		1665		1145		1813		1166		2016		3391	5494
Received License	306	28%	657	39%	190	17%	616	34%	108	9%	451	22%	604	1724
Made it to Exam Process	579	54%	1014	61%	470	41%	1018	56%	372	32%	889	44%	1421	2921
Currently Taking Exams	273	25%	357	21%	280	24%	402	22%	264	23%	438	22%	817	1197
Registered But Yet to Apply for Exam	317	29%	356	21%	508	44%	536	30%	692	59%	867	43%	1517	1759
Registrants who Fell Out of the Process*	184	17%	295	18%	167	15%	259	14%	102	9%	260	13%	453	814
Registrants with Out of State Degrees	257	24%	99	6%	224	20%	103	6%	249	21%	65	3%	730	267

*Registrants with delinquency periods longer than six months

Figures 3-8. LCSW and MFT Process Current Snapshot Breakdown by Year



ASWs in the Licensing Process - 2004 MSW Graduates



MFT Interns in the Licensing Process - 2004 MFT Degree Graduates

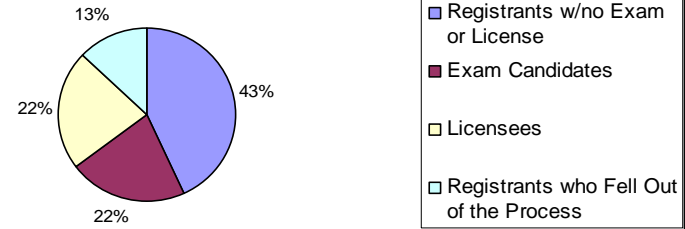


Table 2. Breakdown by Length of Time from Graduation to Registration Application

	Registered < 1 Year from Graduation				Registered > 1 Year from Graduation				Totals	
	LCS		MFT		LCS		MFT		LCS	MFT
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Obtained Registration (ASW, IMF)	2360	70%	5042	92%	1031	30%	452	8%	3391	5494
Received License (LCSW, MFT)	562	93%	1700	99%	42	7%	24	1%	604	1724
Made it to Exam Process	1261	89%	2860	98%	160	11%	61	2%	1421	2921
Currently Taking Exams	699	86%	1160	97%	118	14%	37	3%	817	1197
Registered But Yet to Apply for Exam	767	51%	1443	82%	750	49%	316	18%	1517	1759
Registrants who Fell Out of the Process*	332	73%	739	91%	121	27%	75	9%	453	814
Registrants with Out of State Degrees	409	56%	131	49%	321	44%	136	51%	730	267
*Registrants with delinquency periods longer than six months										

Table 3. Year-by-Year Tracking of Licensing Process - 2002 Graduates

Years from Graduation	0-1		1-2		2-3		3-4		4-5		5-6		6-7	
Period	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT
Registrants w/no Exam or License	766	1510	862	1454	712	1149	504	786	391	528	317	371	317	356
Exam Candidates	0	0	0	73	172	269	290	409	305	374	289	366	273	357
Licensees	0	0	0	2	14	81	100	259	194	493	289	632	306	657
Registrants who Fell Out of the Process	0	0	32	50	75	116	123	178	159	255	184	295	184	295

Table 4. Year-by-Year Tracking of Licensing Process - 2003 Graduates

Years from Graduation	0-1		1-2		2-3		3-4		4-5		5-6	
Period	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT
Registrants w/no Exam or License	777	1665	919	1571	805	1189	627	800	507	552	508	536
Exam Candidates	0	0	0	100	139	335	247	412	291	424	280	402
Licensees	0	0	0	5	16	121	93	375	177	577	190	616
Registrants who Fell Out of the Process	0	0	33	56	82	134	130	213	167	259	167	259

Table 5. Year-by-Year Tracking of Licensing Process – 2004 Graduates

Years from Graduation	0-1		1-2		2-3		3-4		4-5	
Period	1		2		3		4		5	
	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT	LCS	MFT
Registrants w/no Exam or License	815	1867	957	1764	854	1284	693	897	692	867
Exam Candidates	0	0	0	96	139	374	274	431	264	438
Licensees	0	0	0	11	22	146	95	422	108	451
Registrants who Fell Out of the Process	0	0	27	80	65	186	102	260	102	260

Figure 9. Tracking the LCSW Licensing Process – 2002 Grads

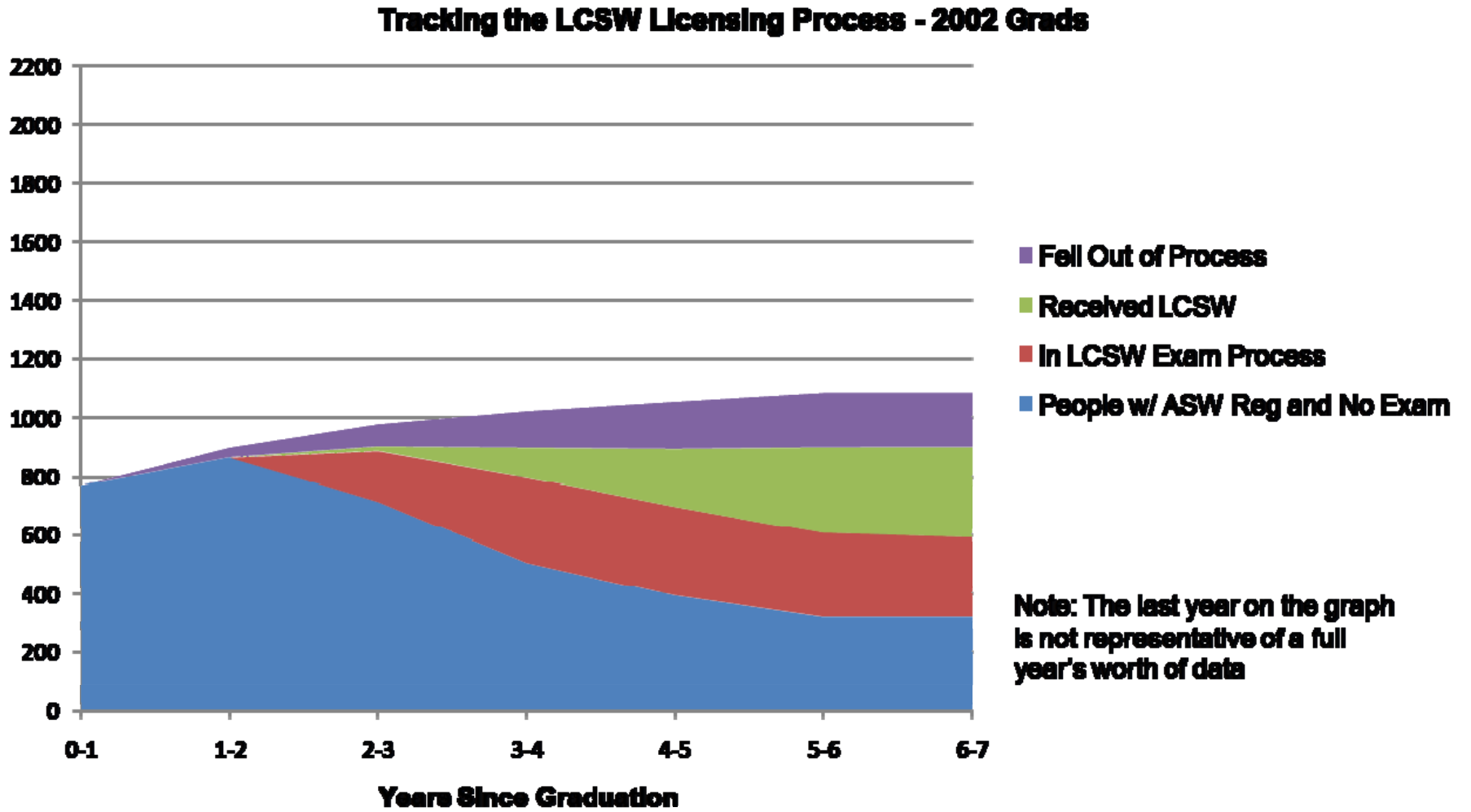


Figure 10. Tracking the LCSW Licensing Process – 2003 Grads

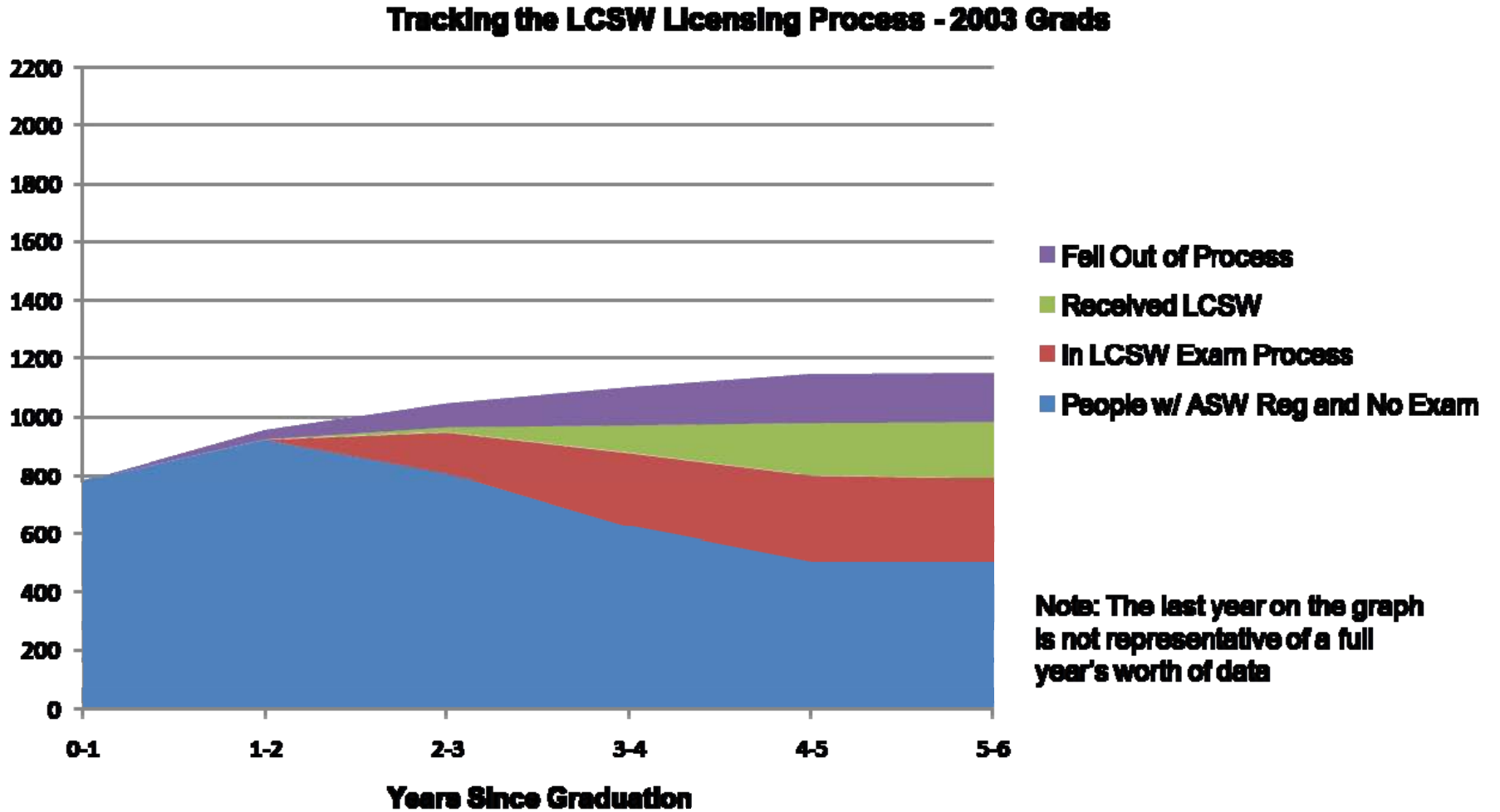


Figure 11. Tracking the LCSW Licensing Process – 2004 Grads

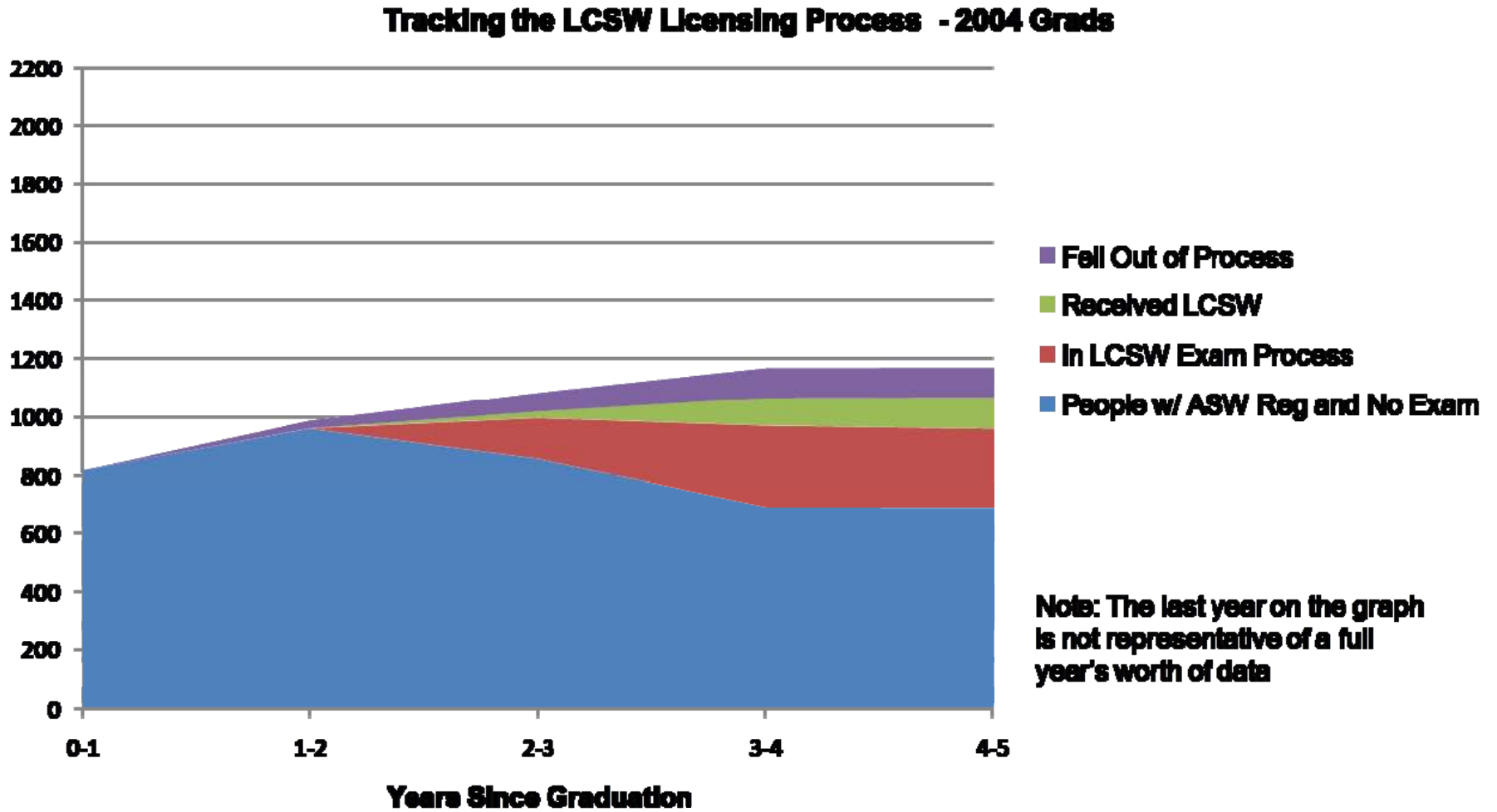


Figure 12. Tracking the MFT Licensing Process – 2002 Grads

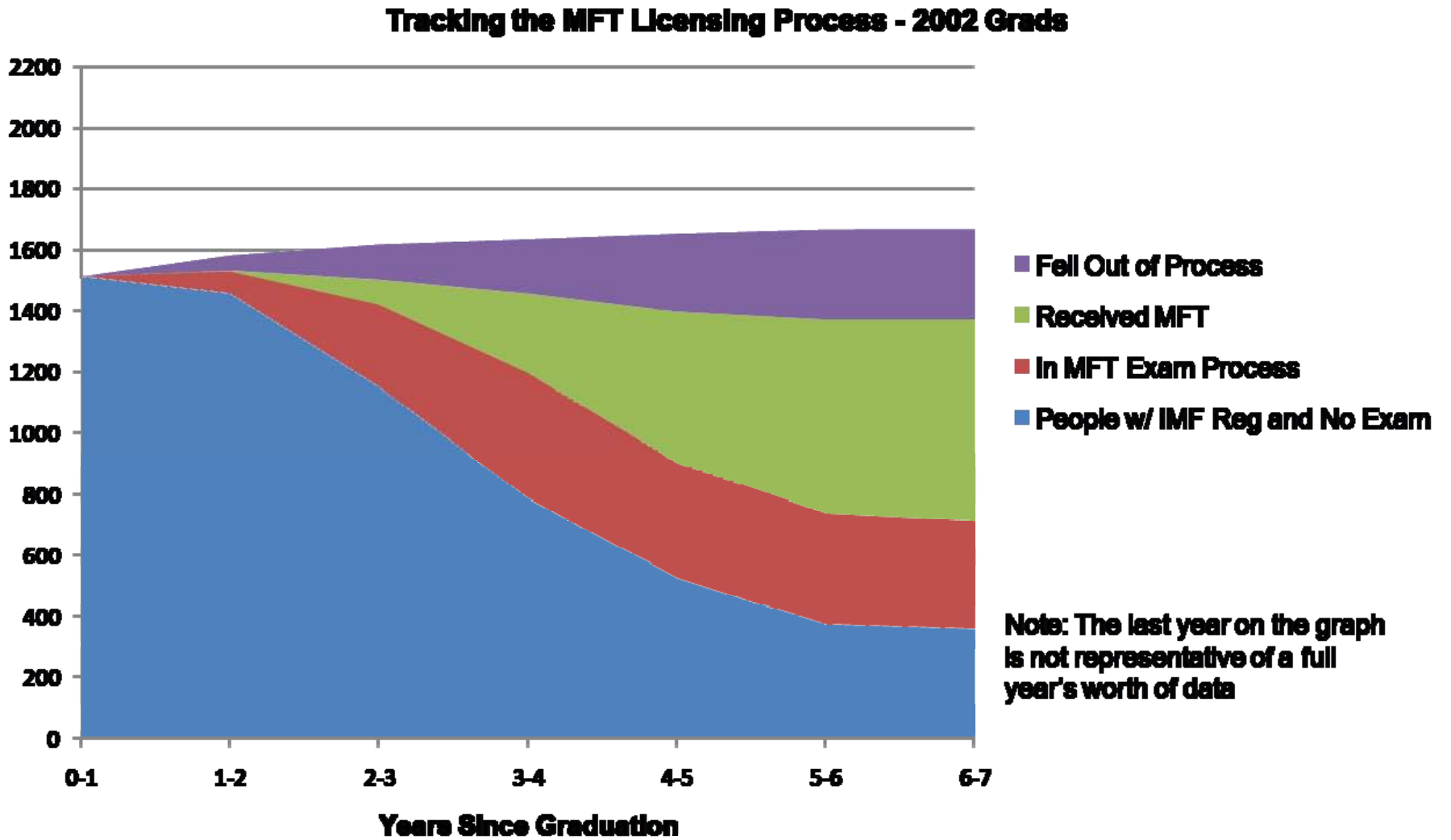


Figure 13. Tracking the MFT Licensing Process – 2003 Grads

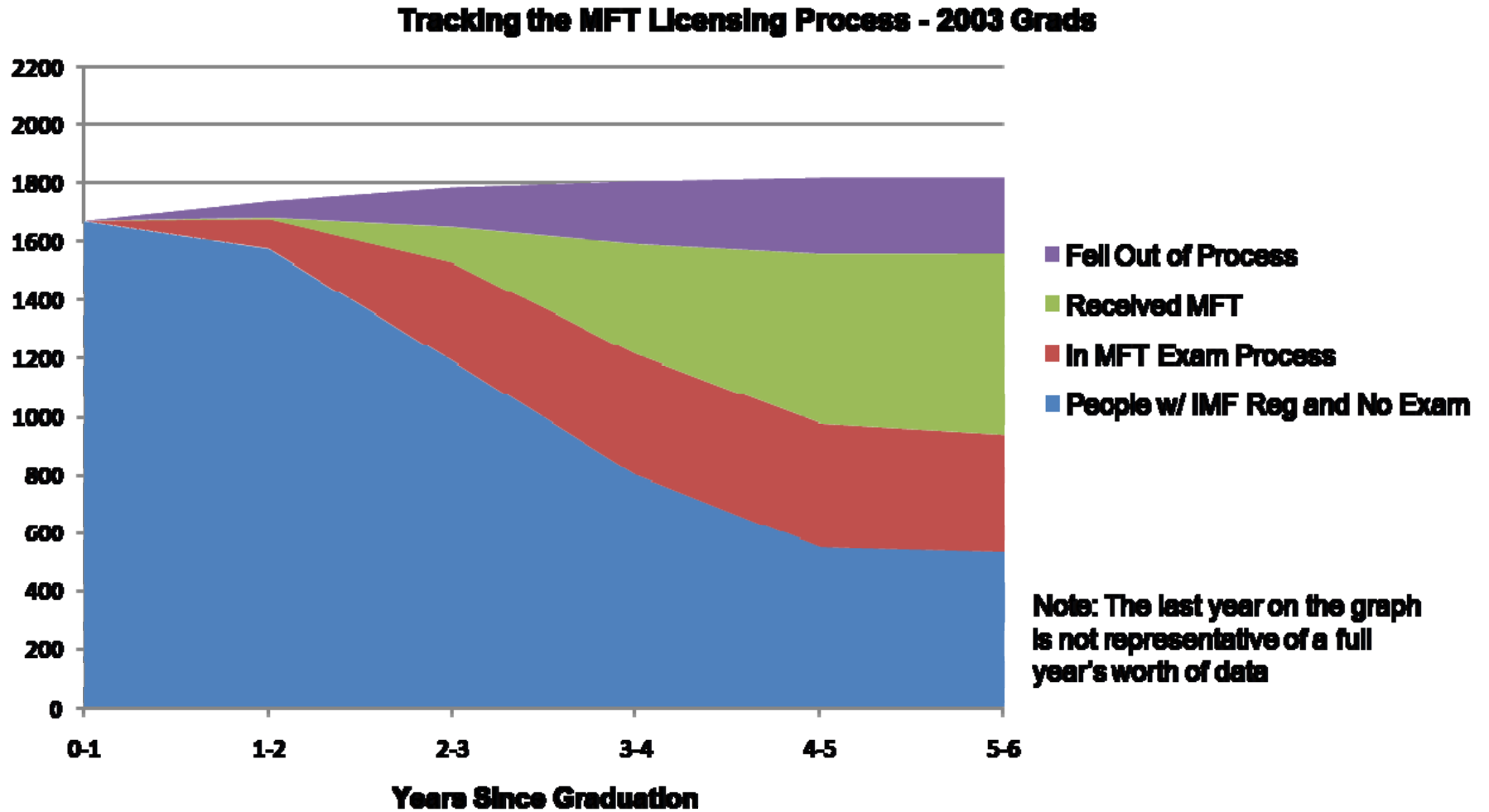


Figure 14. Tracking the MFT Licensing Process – 2004 Grads

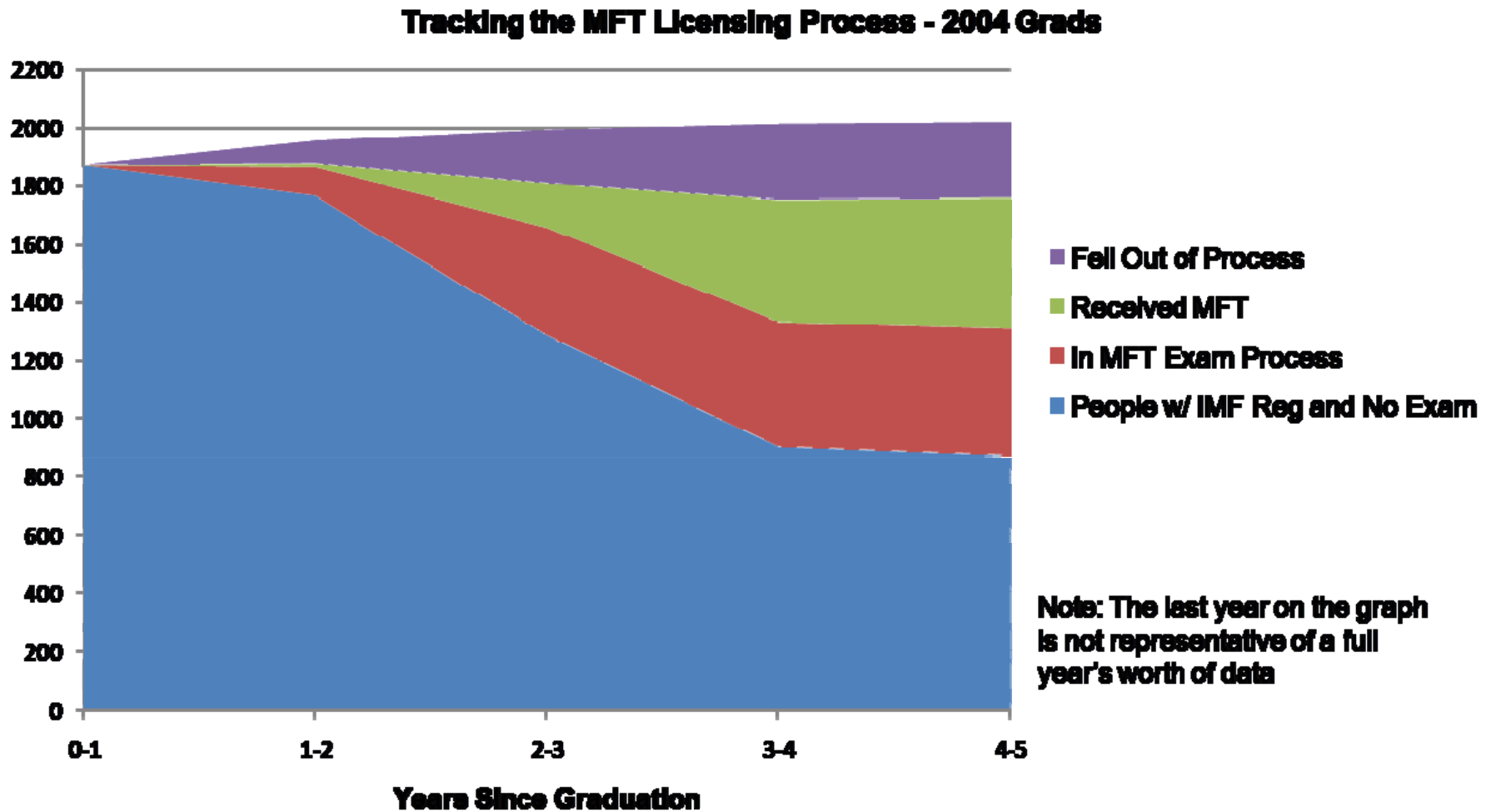


Table 6. Average Years from Graduation to License and Registration Application Submission to License

	2002 Grads		2003 Grads		2004 Grads	
	ASW	IMF	ASW	IMF	ASW	IMF
Grad to License	4.55	4.25	3.99	3.72	3.4	3.21
Registration Application Submission to License	4.13	4.04	3.66	3.55	3.09	3.06

Table 7. Average Examination Attempts for Licensees

	2002 Grads		2003 Grads		2004 Grads	
	ASW	IMF	ASW	IMF	ASW	IMF
Avg Exam Attempts for Licensees	2.71	2.41	2.37	2.27	2.19	2.17
Avg Time from Examination Application to License Issue Date (in years)	1.34	1.11	1.03	0.93	0.66	0.72