

ASWB is committed to supporting test-takers while retaining the exam program's validity by making research-backed changes to the exam experience.

CONTINUED INNOVATIONS REDUCE BURDENS TO TEST-TAKERS

As part of continuous improvement efforts, ASWB is implementing changes to best support the testing experience and simplify processes on exam day. These changes incorporate feedback from test-takers while ensuring that the exams continue to be administered securely.

Revised, modularized exam format | New exams will launch in 2026 as ASWB develops the updated competence assessments.

- The new exam format will allow unsuccessful test-takers to retake only the content area(s) on which they did not earn a passing score. The modularization of the exams will reduce costs to test-takers, help them focus their studies, increase accuracy in the assessment of competence, and strengthen public protections.

Accommodations and arrangements | Certain test-takers – including individuals with a disability or health condition, and those who use English as a second language – are eligible for testing arrangements that may include additional breaks, extra time, or the use of a self-provided translation dictionary.

Three-option multiple choice | ASWB is phasing in three-option multiple-choice questions to improve the testing experience by reducing time pressure and ensuring focus on social work knowledge.

SUPPORTING TEST-TAKERS WITH EXAM PREPARATION

ASWB is committed to providing test-takers with access to content outlines and other resources for preparing themselves for taking a licensing exam.

ASWB Examination Guidebook | A free download available to all test-takers that includes important information about taking the exam, including study plans, reference lists, content outlines, and sample questions.

Test Mastery Inclusion | A free program focused on test preparation and test readiness, available to all test-takers when they register for a licensing exam.

Exam Resources for Educators | A free suite of resources to help educators better understand what knowledge and skills their students will need as they enter the profession, including free group review practice questions.

BROAD SUPPORT FROM THE PROFESSION:

A significant majority of social workers nationwide, including those from diverse demographic backgrounds, support the continuation of the licensing exam. According to a recent survey, 78% believe that new social workers should be required to take the exam, and 73% think it would be a mistake to remove the exam as a requirement.

PROMOTES UNIFORM STANDARDS ACROSS STATES:

The licensing exam provides a consistent and objective standard across states and provinces, facilitating mobility for social workers and ensuring that clients receive care from professionals who meet a national benchmark of competence.

RIGOROUS AND EVOLVING TESTING STANDARDS:

The exam is developed and continuously updated by social workers and psychometric experts to reflect current practice standards and to avoid bias. This ongoing process ensures that the exam remains a valid, reliable, and fair measure of social work competence.

SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

ASWB has launched initiatives to address disparities in exam pass rates among demographic groups, reflecting a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the profession. Removing the exam would undermine these efforts to ensure that all social workers, regardless of background, are equally prepared and competent.