

Title 10
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Subtitle 42 BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS
Chapter 06 Continuing Education Requirements

Authority: Health Occupations Article, §§1-101(b) and (j), 19-205 and 19-308, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 Scope and Objectives.

A. This chapter establishes continuing education requirements for licensed social workers in the State.

B. The objectives of this chapter include:

- (1) Maintenance and enhancement of professional competence;
- (2) Ongoing improvement of professional skills and knowledge; and
- (3) Enrichment of social work services provided to the citizens of Maryland.

.02 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) “Approved programs” means programs that are presented by professionals who are qualified in the content area with education as the focus and that:

- (a) Are offered or provided under the auspices of an authorized sponsor; or
- (b) Are offered or approved by the Board.

(2) “Authorized sponsor” means an individual, agency, or organization that is authorized to provide continuing education programs and to offer under its auspices programs as set forth in Regulation .05 of this chapter.

(3) “Board” means the Board of Social Work Examiners.

(4) “Category I” means activities that are formally organized face-to-face, or live, real time interactive learning experiences provided authorized sponsors as set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.

(5) “Category II” means learning experiences as set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.

(6) “Committee” means the Continuing Education Committee appointed by the Board.

(7) “Continuing education” means completing approved programs designed to provide:

- (a) Enhancement of professional social work practice, values, skills, and knowledge; and
- (b) Enrichment of professional social work services and competence.

(8) “Continuing education unit” means 1 hour (60 minutes) of an approved program as set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.

(9) “County” means a county of Maryland and, unless expressly provided otherwise, Baltimore City.

(10) “Exception” means a deviation or departure from the continuing education requirements for circumstances set forth in Regulation .11 of this chapter that is granted at the discretion of the Board.

(11) “Extension” means a period of time, not to exceed 6 months for renewal, that the Board authorizes to permit additional time for a social worker with an active license to obtain the required continuing education units needed for renewal of a license as set forth in Regulation .10 of this chapter.

(12) “Nonprofit organization” means an organization that is tax exempt under 26 U.S.C. §501(c)(3)—(4).

(13) “Renewal date” means the date the license expires, as specified in the notice sent to the social worker by the Board in accordance with Health Occupations Article, §19-308(b), Annotated Code of Maryland.

(14) “Renewal period” means the period from the date the license was issued or November 1 of the renewal year to October 31 of the expiration year.

(15) “State” means:

- (a) A state, possession, or territory of the United States;
- (b) The District of Columbia; or
- (c) The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

.03 Continuing Education Requirements.

A. The Board shall renew a license for an additional 2-year period if the social worker:

(1) Completes 40 (30 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) continuing education units within the renewal period, of which a minimum of:

(a) 20 (15 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) continuing education units shall be obtained from approved programs which are Category I;

(b) 3 of the required Category I or Category II continuing education units shall have a content area focusing on ethics and professional conduct, including boundary issues, or pertaining to the standards of practice and laws governing the profession of social work in Maryland;

(c) For registered and Board-approved supervisors, 3 of the required Category I or Category II continuing education units shall have a content area focusing on supervision as stipulated in COMAR 10.42.08.04B(3); and

(d) 3 of the required Category I continuing education units shall have anti-oppressive social work practice content focusing on race, culture, or equity, and include one or more of the following topics:

- (i) Cultural humility;

- (ii) Social justice;
- (iii) Racial equity;
- (iv) Implicit bias; or
- (v) Anti-racism practices;

(2) Submits an application as set forth in COMAR 10.42.01 attesting to completion of the required continuing education units in approved programs; and

(3) Completes the required continuing education units within a 2-year period as set forth in §B of this regulation.

B. Time Frame.

(1) Renewed licenses are valid for a 2-year period from November 1 through and including October 31, during which time continuing education units may be earned.

(2) Continuing education units obtained in one renewal period may not be carried over to the next renewal period.

.04 Continuing Education Learning Activities.

A. The social worker shall complete continuing education units relating to the practice of social work that foster improvement, advancement, and extension of the social worker's professional skill, knowledge, and competence.

B. Documentation shall be provided for the continuing education units listed in §§C—F of this regulation as set forth in Regulation .07 of this chapter.

C. Continuing Education Unit.

(1) In an academic classroom setting in an accredited academic institution, if a course is taken for academic credit, 1 academic credit is equal to 5 continuing education units.

(2) In an academic classroom setting in an accredited academic institution, if a course is audited, 1 academic credit is equal to 3 continuing education units.

(3) Programs may include the terms "contact hour", "CEU", "clock hour", and "hour" in the description of the course. Any program described with these terms that lasts 60 minutes provides 1 continuing education unit.

D. Category I Activities. Of the 40 (30 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) required continuing education units:

(1) A minimum of 20 (15 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) shall be earned; and

(2) All may be earned from one or any combination of the following Category I activities provided by a Board-authorized sponsor:

(a) A course including, but not limited to, a series of learning experiences with a specific content and offered for credit, noncredit, or audit by an accredited educational institution;

(b) A workshop including, but not limited to, a session designed to bring together individuals around a common theme to solve problems and gain new knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with ample opportunity to interact;

(c) A seminar including, but not limited to, a group of social workers who meet under expert leadership or a resource individual who conducts a discussion on a specific topic;

(d) A symposium including, but not limited to, a presentation or presentations by professional specialists on a particular subject;

(e) A conference including, but not limited to, sessions of 1 or more days duration designed to explore a central theme; and

(f) Attendance at programs offered at professional or scientific meetings of local, State, regional, national, and international professional or scientific organizations.

E. Category II Activities. Of the 40 (30 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) required continuing education units, a maximum of 20 (15 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) continuing education units may be earned from one or any combination of the following Category II activities:

(1) Peer case conferences among licensed social workers and licensed health care professionals designed to promote more effective interventions and advanced practice;

(2) Journal or clinical book clubs that meet for at least 1 hour and are organized for the purpose of examining the literature and incorporating in the discussion the application of current literature to social work practice;

(3) Preparing and presenting approved face-to-face programs of instruction with 1 hour of preparation or presentation equal to 1 continuing education unit up to a maximum of 12 units per license renewal period;

(4) Preparing and presenting a scientific or professional paper at a meeting of a professional or scientific organization with 1 hour of preparation or presentation equal to 1 continuing education unit up to a maximum of 12 units per license renewal period;

(5) Authoring a professional publication (including peer-reviewed journals, books, and other professional publications) with 1 hour of authoring equal to 1 continuing education unit earned at the time the publication is published up to a maximum of 12 units per license renewal period;

(6) Teaching a social work related course in an academic setting up to a maximum of 12 units per license renewal period;

(7) Online learning provided by a Board-authorized sponsor, such as:

(a) Digital seminar;

(b) Webinar, pre-recorded and non-interactive;

(c) Online course;

(d) Distance learning; and

(e) Home study course;

(8) Attending a foreign or sign language course intended to enhance the delivery of social work services up to a maximum of 6 units per license renewal period; and

(9) Attending in-service staff development, professional training, and invited in-house speaker sessions including, but not limited to, an educational program planned by an agency to assist employees in becoming knowledgeable of and competent in professional social work practice.

.05 Authorized Sponsors and Approval of Continuing Education Programs.

A. Authorized Sponsors.

(1) Authorized sponsors shall offer continuing education programs that meet the objectives set forth in Regulations .01B and .04 of this chapter.

(2) The following are authorized sponsors:

(a) National, regional, or State accredited academic institutions offering academic courses or programs recognized as acceptable social work curriculum subject areas by the Council on Social Work Education;

(b) National, regional, or State social work associations including, but not limited to:

(i) Social work licensing boards;

(ii) The Association of Social Work Boards;

(iii) The National Association of Social Workers; and

(iv) Non-social-work professional membership organizations providing programs that are relevant to the professional development of social workers;

(c) Maryland State or county government entities that have registered using a Board approved form and attested to:

(i) Compliance with all requirements set forth in this chapter;

(ii) Employment of Maryland licensed social workers;

(iii) Adherence to the objectives set forth in Regulation .01 of this chapter; and

(iv) The administration of all continuing education learning activities as required in Regulation .04 of this chapter;

(d) Maryland nonprofit organizations that:

(i) Meet all of the requirements set forth in §A(2)(c) of this regulation; and

(ii) Provide the Board with documentation of current nonprofit status; and

(e) International social work associations and accredited academic institutions including, but not limited to:

(i) Social work licensing boards which provide programs that foster improvement, advancement, and extension of the social worker's professional skill, knowledge, and competence; and

(ii) Non-social-work organizations providing programs that are relevant to the professional development of social workers.

(3) Registration Process. The Board shall issue a notice of authorized sponsor status to a Maryland State or county government entity or Maryland nonprofit organization within 60 days if the applicant:

(a) Completes the online Board approved registration form;

(b) Submits to the Board all required documentation as set forth in §A(2) of this regulation; and

(c) Meets all of the requirements of this regulation.

(4) An authorized sponsor shall:

(a) Include the following in the program announcement, flyer, or brochure:

(i) The date, title, location, objectives, and content of the program;

(ii) The number of continuing education units that will be awarded by the sponsor on a certificate awarded to the social worker on completion of the program;

(iii) A statement that the named sponsor is authorized by the Board; and

(iv) A statement that the named sponsor maintains responsibility for the program;

(b) Ensure that a program certificate or letter of completion on official letterhead is provided and includes the following:

(i) The name of the social worker;

(ii) The date, title, and location of the program;

(iii) The number of continuing education units that are being awarded to the social worker on completion of the program only for actual time in attendance;

(iv) An authorizing name, signature, and contact information for the person responsible for awarding the certificate or letter of completion;

(v) A statement that the named sponsor is authorized by the Board; and

(vi) A statement that the named sponsor maintains responsibility for the program; and

(c) Maintain documentation of continuing education activity for 4 years, which may include pretests and post-tests, but shall include:

(i) Registration and attendance records;

(ii) Stated purpose;

(iii) Content of presentation;

(iv) Time and length of activity; and

(v) Participant evaluations.

(5) The Board may audit authorized sponsors' continuing education programs and activities at any time.

B. The Board shall establish a committee for continuing education that is responsible for recommending to the Board approval for proposed activities, sponsors, and programs offered by individuals or organizations that come under §A(2) of this regulation.

C. The Board shall maintain a roster of authorized sponsors.

(1) All authorized sponsors shall inform the Board of a change in any of the following within 60 days of the change:

- (a) Sponsor name;
- (b) Primary and secondary contacts;
- (c) Mailing address;
- (d) Phone number;
- (e) Email address; and
- (f) Dissolution or closure of the entity or organization.

(2) Failure to notify the Board of a change as set forth under §C(1) of this regulation may result in withdrawal of authorization as a sponsor.

D. Withdrawal of Authorization as a Sponsor.

(1) Authorization as a sponsor may be withdrawn from any authorized sponsor that fails to comply with the:

- (a) Requirements of this regulation;
- (b) Objectives set forth in Regulation .01 of this chapter; and
- (c) Criteria set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.

(2) A sponsor that has had its authorization withdrawn may reapply for authorization by submitting:

- (a) A written request to the Board; and
- (b) Documentation that the sponsor is in compliance with the requirements and criteria set forth in this regulation.

.06 Reporting, Documenting, and Auditing Compliance with Continuing Education Requirements.

A. A social worker who has completed the continuing education requirements shall attest to that on a form supplied by the Board as part of the application for license renewal, reinstatement, or reactivation.

B. The Board shall audit a percentage of social workers, to be selected by the Board, for each renewal period.

C. On request by the Board, a social worker shall provide full documentation of the continuing education units completed in accordance with the requirements of §D of this regulation.

D. Documentation.

(1) A social worker shall provide to the Board:

(a) An official transcript for continuing education units earned in a course taken for academic credit;

(b) A certificate of completion for approved programs;

(c) If a certificate of completion is not available, the following documentation, which may earn Category II continuing education units:

(i) Date, location, and proof of attendance of the program presented;

(ii) Names and credentials of the presenters;

(iii) Agenda, learning objectives, and topics presented; and

(iv) An outline of the presentation;

(d) A reprint of the social worker's completed publication;

(e) If a certificate of completion is not available for an audiovisual instructional program or a home study course, proof of completion of the program or course, such as a post-test passing score or other satisfactory proof as determined by the Board;

(f) Proof of presentations made; and

(g) Topics, dates, times, names of participants, location, and continuing education units earned on official letterhead in structured peer-case conferences and journal club activities.

(2) If a certificate of completion as required by §D(1) of this regulation is not available, the social worker may not earn Category I continuing education units.

E. Record Retention for Active, Expired, or Inactive License.

(1) Active Licenses.

(a) A social worker with an active license shall retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for 3 years after the licensing renewal date for which the report of continuing education was submitted to the Board.

(b) The documentation required in §E(1)(a) of this regulation may be requested by the Board at any time within that 3-year period.

(2) Expired Licenses. An individual who has an expired, non-renewed license shall:

(a) Retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for the 2 years immediately preceding the submission of an application for reinstatement; and

(b) File with the Board documentation of completion of continuing education units at the time of reinstatement .

(3) Inactive Licenses. An individual who has an inactive license shall:

(a) Retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for the 2 years immediately preceding the submission of an application for reactivation; and

(b) File with the Board documentation of completion of continuing education units at the time of reactivation.

F. Responsibility for Conducting the Audits.

(1) The Board staff or the Board's designee shall:

(a) Review and evaluate the documentation submitted for the purpose of the audits;

(b) Notify a social worker by electronic mail or first-class mail if continuing education requirements have not been met; and

(c) Report the findings to the Board.

(2) The Board may require a social worker to submit a copy of the purpose, objectives, and content areas from the continuing education program.

(3) The Board may require a social worker to obtain additional continuing education units if a program is disapproved as a result of a review and evaluation.

.07 Consequences of Failure to Comply with Continuing Education Requirements.

A. The Board shall take disciplinary action under COMAR 10.42.04 against any social worker who fraudulently attests to or does not submit continuing education documentation.

B. A social worker who fails to complete the continuing education requirements within the time frame specified under Regulation .03 of this chapter may be subject to informal or formal discipline.

C. A social worker who fails to meet the continuing education requirements may not be issued a license renewal.

D. The Board shall notify a social worker by electronic mail and first-class mail that the license has not been renewed if the following has occurred:

(1) The Board has not received the required certification of completion of continuing education requirements by October 31 of the renewal year;

(2) Continuing education requirements have not been met; or

(3) The social worker has not responded to audit requirements within the time required.

E. The Board shall close an application that is not approved after 1 year from date of receipt.

.08 Reinstatement of Licenses.

An individual whose license has not been renewed is entitled to reinstatement within 5 years if the following is completed on or before October 31 of the 5th year after the date the license expired:

A. All required documentation is submitted and approved by the Board;

B. The reinstatement fee established by the Board is paid, as provided in COMAR 10.42.05.02; and

C. The individual has met all continuing education requirements by obtaining 40 (30 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) continuing education units in the 2 years preceding the individual's application for reinstatement.

.09 Reactivation of Licenses.

An individual whose license was placed on inactive status is entitled to reactivation within 5 years if the following is completed on or before October 31 of the 5th year after the date the license was placed on inactive status:

A. All required documentation is submitted and approved by the Board;

B. The reactivation fee established by the Board is paid, as provided in COMAR 10.42.05.02; and

C. The individual has met all continuing education requirements by obtaining 40 (30 for Licensed Bachelor Social Workers) continuing education units in the 2 years preceding the individual's application for reactivation.

.10 Extension of Time.

A. An actively licensed social worker may file a request to extend time and conditionally renew a license. The request shall:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) Include supporting documentation; and
- (3) Be filed before October 1 of the renewal year.

B. The Board shall consider and render a decision on the request within 21 days of receiving the written request.

C. The Board may grant an extension of time and conditionally renew an active social work license for up to 6 months if the Board determines that:

- (1) Failure to fulfill the requirements is a result of:
 - (a) Functional impairment or prolonged illness that has been diagnosed by a health care practitioner;
 - (b) Mandatory military service or deployment;
 - (c) A prolonged absence from the United States;
 - (d) An officially declared State of Emergency or disaster; or
 - (e) Financial hardship; and
- (2) The social worker attempted to meet the continuing education requirements.

D. Failure of a social worker with an active license to obtain the required continuing education units on or before the 6-month extension expires shall result in:

- (1) The expiration of the license;
- (2) The social worker's inability to practice social work in Maryland; and
- (3) The Board placing the license on non-renewed status.

E. Continuing education hours earned after October 31 of the second year to fulfill the conditions of an extension may only be credited to the preceding 2-year period.

F. The Board shall audit a social worker who has been granted an extension of time under this regulation for the completion of continuing education requirements.

.11 Exceptions from Certain Requirements.

A. Before attending a program, a social worker with an active license requesting an exception from certain requirements of this chapter shall provide:

(1) Official documentation that confirms circumstances beyond the control of the social worker because of:

(a) A functional impairment or prolonged illness that has been diagnosed by a health care practitioner;

(b) Mandatory military service or deployment;

(c) A prolonged absence from the United States;

(d) An officially declared State of Emergency or disaster; or

(e) Financial hardship;

(2) Documentation that describes the continuing education programs selected by the social worker considered equivalent to continuing education activities described in this chapter; and

(3) An acceptable procedure for documenting the continuing education units.

B. The Board shall audit an actively licensed social worker who has been granted an exception from the continuing education requirements.

Administrative History

Effective date:

Regulations .01—.07 adopted as an emergency provision effective March 22, 1994 (21:8 Md. R. 666); adopted permanently effective September 12, 1994 (21:18 Md. R. 1509)

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Regulations .01—.06 repealed and new Regulations .01—.12 adopted effective November 1, 2003 (29:9 Md. R. 745)

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