
**If you cannot attend in person, please contact Jaime Hoyle at
jaime.hoyle@dhp.virginia.gov**

3:00 p.m. Call to Order – Sherwood Randolph, LCSW, Chairperson

- Welcome/Introductions
- Mission Statement/Emergency Egress-----Page 2

Approval of Minutes

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Presentation

“Analysis of LCSW Survey Results”

- Results in Brief-----Page 22

“Analysis of LMSW and LBSW Survey Results”

HealthCare Workforce Data Center

Yetty Shobo, PhD., Director and Barbara Hodgdon, PhD., Deputy Director

Unfinished Business

- Staff update on proposed alternative pathways in other states and the November 2024 Board Report on Efforts to Diversify and Strengthen the Clinical Social Work Workforce
- Summary of Stakeholder Responses

Stakeholder Discussion

Next Steps

- **Consideration of Potential Recommendation to Board**

Adjournment

*Indicates a Committee vote is required.

This information is in **DRAFT** form and is subject to change. The official agenda and packet will be approved by the Board at the meeting. One printed copy of the agenda and packet will be available for the public to view at the meeting pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3707(F).

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

EMERGENCY EGRESS

Please listen to the following instructions about exiting these premises in the event of an emergency.

In the event of a fire or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, alarms will sound. When the alarms sound, leave the room immediately. Follow any instructions given by the Security staff.

Board Room 1

Exit the room using one of the doors at the back of the room. **(Point)** Upon exiting the room, turn **RIGHT**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.

Board Room 2

Exit the room using one of the doors at the back of the room. (Point) Upon exiting the room, turn **RIGHT**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.

You may also exit the room using the side door **(Point)**, turn **Right** out the door and make an immediate **Left**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.

Board Rooms 3 and 4

Exit the room using one of the doors at the back of the room. **(Point)** Upon exiting the room, turn **RIGHT**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.

Training Room 1

Exit the room using one of the doors at the back of the room. **(Point)** Upon exiting the room, turn **LEFT**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.

Training Room 2

Exit the room using one of the doors at the back of the room. **(Point)** Upon exiting the doors, turn **LEFT**. Follow the corridor to the emergency exit at the end of the hall.

Upon exiting the building, proceed straight ahead through the parking lot to the fence at the end of the lot. Wait there for further instructions.



DRAFT
Virginia Board of Social Work
Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.
9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, VA 23233
Board Room 3

- BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sherwood Randolph Jr., MSW, LCSW
Martha Meadows, MA, LCSW
- BOARD STAFF PRESENT:** Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director
Charlotte Lenart, Deputy Executive Director
Sharniece Vaughan, Licensing & Operations Supervisor
Rebecca Walker, Licensing Specialist
- DHP STAFF PRESENT:** Yetty Shobo, Ph.D., Director, DHP Healthcare Workforce Data Center (*remote via Webex*)
Barbara Hodgdon, Ph.D., Deputy Director, DHP Healthcare Workforce Data Center (*left meeting at 4:40pm*)
- STAKE HOLDER ATTENDEES:** Denise Daly Konrad, Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) (*remote via Webex*)
Matthew DeCarlo, Ph.D., LCSW, MSW Program Director of Saint Joseph's University (*remote via Webex*)
La'Toya Hines, National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) (*remote via Webex*)
Kevin Holder, LCSW, Richmond Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers (*remote via Webex*)
Joseph Lynch, LCSW (*remote via Webex*)
Isiah Marshall Jr., Ph.D., Dean of Norfolk State University
Mark Smith, Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) and Virginia Society of Clinical Social Workers (VSCSW)
Kim Young, LCSW, Dope Black Social Worker (*remote via Webex, left meeting at 4:55pm*)
- CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Randolph called the Committee Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
- MISSION STATEMENT:** Mr. Randolph read the mission statement of the Department of Health Professions, which was also the mission statement of the Board.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The Board reviewed the minutes from the last meeting held on May 28, 2025.
Motion: Mr. Randolph made a motion, which Ms. Meadows properly seconded, to approve the minutes from May 28, 2025, once the modifications discussed during the meeting have been made. The motion passed unanimously.
- PUBLIC COMMENT:** Dr. Marshall introduced himself as the Dean of Norfolk State University (NSU) and expressed his desire to become acquainted with the Board. He mentioned that he reviewed the pass/fail rate data from the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) and thanked the Board for conducting a survey. Dr. Marshall shared that NSU offers a licensure prep course every Fall and Spring, which includes a comprehensive exam focusing on both curriculum content and strategies for taking standardized tests. He also noted that he has assigned a director to assess what additional support students might need to successfully pass the exam. Finally, he inquired if the Board could provide information on exam candidates who failed the exam.

Dr. DeCarlo noted that two weeks ago, Washington, D.C. announced that they are considering an alternative pathway to the exam, which would eliminate the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exam requirements for BSW and MSW licensure. He also added that ASWB has made some unannounced changes and posted fraudulent documents on their website.

**DISCUSSION WITH
STAKEHOLDERS:**

Due to the delayed distribution of the survey, Mr. Randolph proposed extending the response period for the LCSW survey. He also noted that the next round of surveys is intended to target only LMSWs and LBSWs.

Review of Survey Questions for LMSWs and LBSWs

The Committee and stakeholders reviewed and approved several revisions to the survey to better align with licensure requirements for LMSWs and LBSWs. A discussion was held on the value of these licenses, including relevant historical context. Dr. DeCarlo proposed additional survey questions, which the Committee considered. She also inquired about the questions submitted to ASWB following their presentation at the March 5, 2025, Ad Hoc Committee meeting; Mr. Randolph suggested this be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Randolph proposed combining the LMSW and LBSW surveys into one survey so the results could be reviewed at the next meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

At the next meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee will continue its review and discussion of the following items:

- Analysis of the survey responses collected
- ASWB's responses to the Committee's submitted questions
- DHPs Report Regarding Efforts to Diversify and Strengthen the Clinical Social Work Workforce dated November 21, 2024
- Stakeholder feedback
- Public comments received through the survey
- Additional information from staff regarding proposed alternative licensure pathways from surrounding states

NEXT MEETING DATES:

The next meeting date will be determined at a later time, pending the availability of meeting space, staff, and Board members. Mr. Randolph proposed holding the next meeting on Tuesday, with a suggested start time of 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Randolph adjourned the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

Sherwood Randolph Jr., MSW, LCSW

Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director

ASWB admits “gaps in communication” about exam timing & breaks: State boards must act.

A remarkable thing happened in Maryland. ASWB admitted the truth!

Background

If you are not familiar with the fact that 2025 ASWB examinations contained surprise rule changes, see [my previous blog post on “sneak-revisions” to the Exam Guidebook](#). Dana Korbin also offers a succinct summary of the experience from the perspective of a neurodiverse test-taker testifying at a Maryland workgroup on license exam reform: <https://youtu.be/bwDh6TPdmEs?start=7045&end=7157>

To briefly summarize, when ASWB switched to a new test vendor, they changed the timing and break policy for their examinations without adequate notification to test-takers. Surprise rule changes invalidate test scores and state boards’ automatic licensure decisions.

ASWB’s test scores and state boards’ licensure decisions are not valid for Q2 2025. Since most social work programs graduate students for examination in Q2, these invalid test scores prevent licensure to thousands of educated, competent social workers.

Previously, ASWB exams were a single 4-hour, 170-item examination in which a test taker could review answers to any question at any time. A common test-taking strategy is to answer every easy question on the examination, flagging difficult questions for deeper analysis once the test-taker reaches the end of the exam.

ASWB suggests this in their [Examination Guidebook’s](#) Test-Taking Tips:

The exam administration software lets test-takers highlight text, so you can easily go through the exam more than once. Some test-takers like to move fairly quickly through the examination, answering the questions they are sure of and flagging the others for later review. Then they go back and make a second and third sweep, taking more time on each question.

Don’t take too long on any one question—instead, flag it for review

Once you’ve made one or two passes, begin answering the questions that you’re less confident about. Still, be aware of when you seem to be lingering too long over a

question. You can easily flag these for review. Once you've gone completely through the exam, return to these questions and spend more time with them...

Check your work

You may find that you've completed the examination well ahead of the four-hour time limit. If you do, spend the extra time checking over your work. (p. 33-34)

This technique helps test-takers effectively use the allotted 4 hours by spending the most time on the most difficult questions and ensuring all questions are answered. However, this is no longer possible.

Since the end of March 2025, ASWB exams are instead divided into two halves, each with 85 questions and lasting no more than 2 hours. Test-takers must submit answers to the first section prior to the new, scheduled break.

As Ms. Kobrin notes, ASWB's notification was confusing, and in some cases, made it impossible for test-takers to know the new rules for the examination prior to test day.

First, a month prior to implementation, ASWB notified test-takers they would need to submit their answers to the first 85 questions before taking their break.

Two weeks *after* implementing the new rules, ASWB notified test-takers that each section is timed at two hours, and removed language stating test-takers could move freely between sections to review their responses. Additionally, the new language clarified that if test-takers submit their answers to the first half prior to two hours, that time is not added to the second half of the exam.

Rather than admit the problem and repair the harm to the thousands of impacted social workers, ASWB and its member boards seem content to move forward with a cover-up.

They admit it!

Felicia Dennison, Director of Examination Administration, admits that ASWB did not communicate these changes in the manual, but maintained that emails clarified all new policies prior to implementation.

https://youtu.be/9hBluzQ_sz8?start=4686&end=4836

Lavina Harless, Senior Director of Examination Services, who corrected Ms. Dennison, clarifying that ASWB did not communicate that there were two timed halves for the exam.

https://youtu.be/9hBluzQ_sz8?start=5354&end=5432

More than that, Harless confirmed that confusion was the fault of a hasty transition to a new vendor. PearsonVUE's change was a surprise to ASWB, meaning the change had not been pretested prior to implementation.

https://youtu.be/9hBluzQ_sz8?start=5426&end=5461

Why were these changes made? To facilitate the transition to remote proctoring (online exams)..

https://youtu.be/9hBluzQ_sz8?start=5505&end=5556

How will these changes impact people with disabilities? ASWB intends to monitor the results but did not study the issue prior to implementation.

https://youtu.be/9hBluzQ_sz8?start=5252&end=5370

Despite committing to update the manual for people with disabilities to reflect the new time, structure, and break policy, ASWB has not done so yet.

Updated timeline

Test-takers preparing for Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) examinations in 2025 have been presented with conflicting information about how much time they are allotted for each section of the examination, the number of breaks provided, whether they can access all of half of their answers to review at the end of their exam, among other factors.

Since the publication of my initial blog, I have filled out the timeline more below:

- January 2025 or prior: ASWB decides to return to PearsonVUE proctoring services. The [PSI exam guidebook](#) stated the long-standing test policies of ASWB:
 - “Each ASWB examination contains 170 multiple-choice questions; 20 of these questions are being pretested for possible inclusion as scored questions on a future ASWB examination. Your performance on the pretest questions will not affect your score on the examination — only the 150 remaining questions will count toward your score. The pretest and scored questions are mixed together on the examination.
 - **You will have four hours to complete the examination**, which is administered on a PSI computer. The testing program allows the **test-taker to move freely through the exam**, change answers, flag questions for later attention, skip questions, highlight text, and review questions.
 - **You may take breaks** of up to 10 minutes during the four-hour exam **at your discretion**.
 - Testing time does not stop for breaks.
 - You may leave the testing room during breaks only to use the closest restroom and to access a drink and snack.
- February 26, 2025: ASWB uploads a new [PearsonVUE exam guidebook](#) including a mix of their old policies and a partial list of new policies.

- “There are two types of breaks that you may take during your exam, a scheduled 10-minute break and unscheduled breaks.”
- **“You will be given the entire exam time at the beginning of the test.”**
- **“There are no individually timed sections, so manage your time accordingly.”**
- “After you complete the first section, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit them.”
- “You will then have the option of taking a scheduled break, during which the clock will stop for a maximum of 10 minutes.”
- **“You will have four hours to complete the examination**, which is administered on a Pearson VUE computer.**The testing program allows the test-taker to move freely through each section of the exam.** Within the section, the test-taker may change answers, flag questions for later attention, skip questions, highlight text, and review questions.
- February 28, 2025: ASWB requires test-takers to sign the [Candidate Rules Agreement](#), which includes language about ASWB’s guidebook.
 - **I have read the break policy in the ASWB Examination Guidebook. I understand that I will be required to submit the answers to the first section of the exam and that I may then take a 10-minute break**, during which the clock will stop. The timer will continue during any additional unscheduled breaks I choose to take; therefore, it is in my best interest to use the restroom or otherwise address personal needs before beginning the exam. I will remain in the test center and may leave only to use the restroom facilities that are closest to the testing room.
- March 15-30, 2025: ASWB’s [webpage hosting the exam guidebook](#) indicates a two-week transition from PSI to PearsonVUE test vendors.
 - No examinations were administered.
- March 31, 2025: PearsonVUE implements a different break policy than the Exam Guidebook
 - According to [Director Harless’s testimony in the Maryland workgroup](#), ASWB learned after PearsonVUE’s implementation that there are two individually timed 2-hour sections containing 85 items each.
- April 10, 2025: ASWB [publishes a blog post](#) restating some parts of the new policy, but omitting the rules that each section lasts two hours and any unused time in the first half does not get added to the second half.
 - “As part of ASWB’s continuing efforts to improve the testing experience, test-takers now have a scheduled 10-minute break during the social work licensing exams. After completing the first 85-question section, test-takers are prompted to review and submit their answers for that section. At that time, the test-taker’s answers for that section are recorded and can no longer be reviewed or changed. The testing clock then stops for up to 10 minutes, allowing test-takers to spend the full four hours answering questions.”

- April 14, 2025: ASWB updates the [PearsonVUE exam guidebook](#) to reflect the full set of policies implemented on March 31st. This guidebook has no revision date.
 - **You will be given two hours for each 85-question section of the exam.** If your time ends for a section, your answers will be automatically recorded, and you will not be able to go back to those questions.
 - If you complete an 85-question section before the two-hour time limit has ended, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit your answers.
 - After the first section is complete, you will have the option of taking a scheduled break, during which the clock will stop for a maximum of 10 minutes. If you choose not to take the break, you may end the break immediately.
 - You may take less than 10 minutes for your scheduled break. **Any remaining break time, however, will not extend the amount of time allocated for answering the remaining exam questions.**
 - It is important to return on time from the scheduled break and to allow time for the exam proctor to readmit you into the exam room. If you take more than 10 minutes for this scheduled break, the excess time will be taken out of your exam time.
 - **When the break has expired, the exam clock automatically begins again. The second section has 85 questions, numbered 1 to 85. You will have two hours to complete the second section.**
- April 14, 2025: ASWB uploads a [new PSI Exam Guidebook](#) which included the new exam policies implemented only with PearsonVUE.
 - Language in the copy created on November 21, 2024 (according to the PDF metadata) and actually implemented with the test vendor PSI.
 - Each ASWB examination contains 170 multiple-choice questions; 20 of these questions are being pretested for possible inclusion as scored questions on a future ASWB examination. Your performance on the pretest questions will not affect your score on the examination — only the 150 remaining questions will count toward your score. The pretest and scored questions are mixed together on the examination.
 - **You will have four hours to complete the examination**, which is administered on a PSI computer. The testing program allows the **test-taker to move freely through the exam**, change answers, flag questions for later attention, skip questions, highlight text, and review questions.
 - Language in the fraudulent copy created on April 14, 2025 (according to the PDF metadata) and never implemented with the test vendor PSI
 - The exam is divided into two 85-question sections, each of which has a two-hour time limit. Questions appear on the screen one at a time, and test-takers select their answer. The software allows users to zoom in and make text appear larger. A help screen is available during the entire exam.

- Within each section, you may skip questions and go back to them later, mark questions for review, highlight and strike through text, and go back and change answers. After you have completed the first section, you will not be able to return to it
- You will be given two hours for each 85-question section of the exam. If your time ends for a section, your answers will be automatically recorded, and you will not be able to go back to those questions.
- If you complete an 85-question section before the two-hour time limit has ended, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit your answers.
- After the first section is complete, you will have the option of taking a scheduled break, during which the clock will stop for a maximum of 10 minutes. If you choose not to take the break, you may end the break immediately.
- You may take less than 10 minutes for your scheduled break. Any remaining break time, however, will not extend the amount of time allocated for answering the remaining exam questions.
- It is important to return on time from the scheduled break and to allow time for the exam proctor to readmit you into the exam room. If you take more than 10 minutes for this scheduled break, the excess time will be taken out of your exam time.
- When the break has expired, the exam clock automatically begins again. The second section has 85 questions, numbered 1 to 85. You will have two hours to complete the second section.
 - The fraudulent PSI examination guidebook contradicts the testimony of Dennison & Harless, who state these policies were implemented only with their new vendor, PearsonVUE, who also pretested those changes.
- June 16, 2025: ASWB [publishes another blog post](#) explaining the new rules
- As of this writing on August 6, 2025:
 - ASWB's [Nonstandard Testing Arrangements Handbook](#) for people with disabilities does not include any of the new break policies, including exam timing, 85-item halves, or automatic submission of the first section.
 - ASWB's [\\$85 practice examination](#) uses the rules from March 2025.
 - No revision date is noted on PSI or PearsonVUE examination guidebooks.

Contrary to best practices and testing standards, ASWB modified their Exam Guidebook without adequately notifying stakeholders—test-takers, boards, and the public. By using the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine to view earlier versions of ASWB's Exam Guidebook and website, we can provide a clear timeline for exam policy changes that demonstrates no examinee in April or May was adequately notified or provided appropriate documentation to prepare for the exam.

Ethical violations

We can group ASWB's legal and ethical violations into a few distinct categories, starting with the least harmful.

A. Inadequate notification: Changes to long-standing test policies that were announced to test-takers a month prior to implementation.

- 1) Is 32 days (February 26-March 30) enough notice for these policy changes?
 - a) There is a built-in ten minute break at the two-hour mark.
 - b) The exam now consists of two sections.
 - c) Test-takers cannot move freely between sections.
 - d) Once you submit your answers to the first section, you cannot return to them.
- 2) How could test-takers have prepared themselves adequately for the new rules?
 - a) ASWB's old rules were published in ASWB's PSI guidebook as late as February 12, 2025 ([wayback machine](#))
 - b) As of August 2025, ASWB continues to sell out-of-date practice examinations with the old rules.
 - c) ASWB did not engage or coordinate with the preparatory industry, leading to test-takers investing in learning strategies that were now irrelevant or harmful.
- 3) What psychometric evidence has ASWB published and shared with boards demonstrating these rules produce equivalent results to the old rules?
 - a) The *Testing Standards* ASWB cites provide clear guidance on the statistical tests to be used, and the importance of sharing them with test users and test-takers prior to implementation.
 - b) ASWB does not indicate the revision date for their examination guidebooks, as required by the *Testing Standards*.

Given that most test-takers prepare for months, providing at least three months' notice was necessary. ASWB sells an \$85 practice examination with the old rules, and third party test preparation services all tutor students using the old rules. Instead, ASWB gave test-takers one month.

B. Legally indefensible lack of notification: Changes to long-standing test policies that were a surprise to test-takers, announced after their implementation.

- 1) Is -15 days (April 14-March 31) enough notice for these policy changes?
 - a) Each section is timed at two hours.

- b) If you finish the first section in under two hours, that time is removed from the overall four hours of the examination.
- 2) How could test-takers have prepared themselves adequately for the new rules?
 - a) ASWB sent an email to test-takers after the policy was implemented.
 - b) ASWB updated their examination guidebook 15 days after implementation.
 - c) ASWB did not engage test preparation services to update their materials prior to the release of these rules.
- 3) What psychometric evidence has ASWB published and shared with boards demonstrating these rules produce equivalent results to the old rules?
 - a) The *Testing Standards* ASWB cites provide clear guidance on the statistical tests to be used, and the importance of sharing them with test users and test-takers prior to implementation.
 - b) ASWB does not indicate the revision date for their examination guidebooks, as required by the *Testing Standards*.

Even though a two week gap seems minimal—perhaps a few hundred test-takers across the country—alarmingly, no outreach or efforts have been made to address the harm done to test-takers erroneously gatekept from the profession.

C. Negligence

- 1) When ASWB noticed their test vendor implemented unannounced changes, ASWB made no proactive efforts to address the harm to test-takers such as
 - a) Rapid exam retakes
 - b) Individual exam reviews by ASWB
 - c) Fee waivers for examination retakes
 - d) Free test-taking resources using the new rules.
- 2) ASWB did not test these new changes prior to implementation.
 - a) As Director Harless states, it was a surprise that PearsonVUE imposed a two-hour time limit on each section, meaning ASWB did not test it prior to implementation.
 - b) For the other changes, Director Harless states they were tested by psychometricians, but these tests are never made available to anyone for review, contrary to *Standards*.
 - c) In fact, ASWB documentation does not meet the standards for adequate documentation under the *Standards*.
- 3) Because these changes were not tested prior to implementation, ASWB and its member boards effectively forced Q2 test-takers to pay for an ASWB exam validation study
 - a) As Harless and Dennison state, ASWB is working with psychometrics vendors to assess for unanticipated consequences of the policy changes for people with disabilities. However, this testing is required prior to implementation.
 - b) Indeed, the *Standards* require exam developers to publish equilibration studies, demonstrating core statistical properties have not changed.

- c) According to its IRS Form 990, ASWB has \$47 million in assets it could direct towards the production and publication of psychometric results.

D. Fraud

- 1) ASWB asserts the validity of test score interpretations from all impacted test-takers despite violating standards on testing and announcing rules prior to implementation.
 - a) How can ASWB justify test score interpretations for examinees whose rules were changed with no notice (i.e., all test-takers in March 31-April 14)?
 - b) How can ASWB justify test score interpretations for examinees whose rules were changed with inadequate notice (i.e., all test-takers in Q2 2025)?
- 2) ASWB changed its out-of-use exam guidebook, obscuring the revision date for controversial policy changes, and its negligence in implementation.
 - a) How can state boards abide by the Code of Ethics and contract with a test vendor who publishes fraudulent exam documentation?
 - b) How does publishing a fraudulent guidebook violate state contracting laws?

Conclusion

No test-taker has been given enough time to prepare for the new exam format. Furthermore, ASWB has not provided social work boards with any psychometric evidence that the new two-section format of the examination is psychometrically equivalent to one in which you could return to any item at any time. Many boards appeared as blindsided by the policy changes as test-takers were.

Fundamentally, this is now how examination programs are supposed to operate. It is obviously unethical to change the rules of an examination without adequate notification. Social workers spend thousands of dollars and months of their time to prepare for the examination.

For test-takers in Q2, state boards and their national organization should prioritize:

1. Rapid retesting for all Q2 test-takers.
2. In states where boards are empowered to do so, review individual score reports.
3. The publication of equilibration studies from ASWB before and after the change demonstrating equivalence.
4. Conferring with the board's counsel to produce a statement on legal defensibility of licensure decisions made without notice and the notification period considered "legally defensible" to change the rules of an exam.

Examinees in any high-stakes exam are entitled to current and accurate information about the examination process. Furthermore, when substantive changes are made to that process, the

exam developer is required to first establish measurement equivalency between the old and new processes. For April & May 2025 examinees, ASWB met neither of those obligations. These obligations are set by the AERA Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Test developers must abide by those standards as a foundational element of the legal defensibility of a high-stakes exam.

While the addition of a scheduled break may be welcomed by some examinees, it is unclear how it may impact exam results. To the degree examinees are refreshed and able to refocus after a break, performance may improve. At the same time, for those examinees who struggle with time management or test anxiety, having a clock running down toward zero twice in their exam process instead of once may negatively impact performance. Because ASWB apparently failed to meaningfully investigate the impacts of this structural change prior to implementing it, the effects on performance remain unknown.

In addition, the forced-break process is actually likely to shorten the total exam time taken by examinees. Any remaining time at the completion of the first section is not carried over to the second half of the test. Remaining time from either half that the examinee might otherwise have used to review (and, if necessary, change) responses to items in the other half of the exam cannot be used for that purpose.

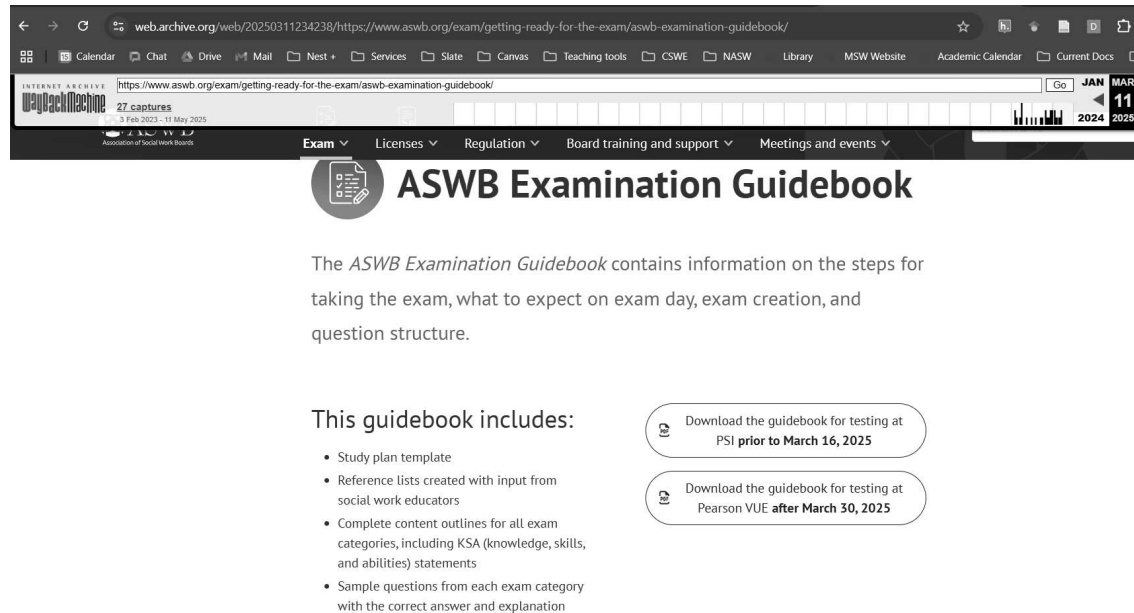
Ultimately, examinees cannot appropriately prepare themselves for an exam where the structure is unclear or is meaningfully different from what they were told it would be. Examinees who believed that the structured break was optional, and to “manage your time accordingly” explicitly by ASWB explicitly advised, may have had their results negatively impacted by a structure different from what ASWB had told them it would be.

Additionally, social work boards cannot rely on the legal defensibility of licensure decisions made using ASWB examinations using an unannounced, untested ruleset. The 50,000+ social work students graduating in May require examination to enter the licensed workforce in about 75% of states. We must act now to avert workforce-wide impacts.

Appendix: A timeline of sneak-revisions to the exam guidebook using screenshots & PDF metadata

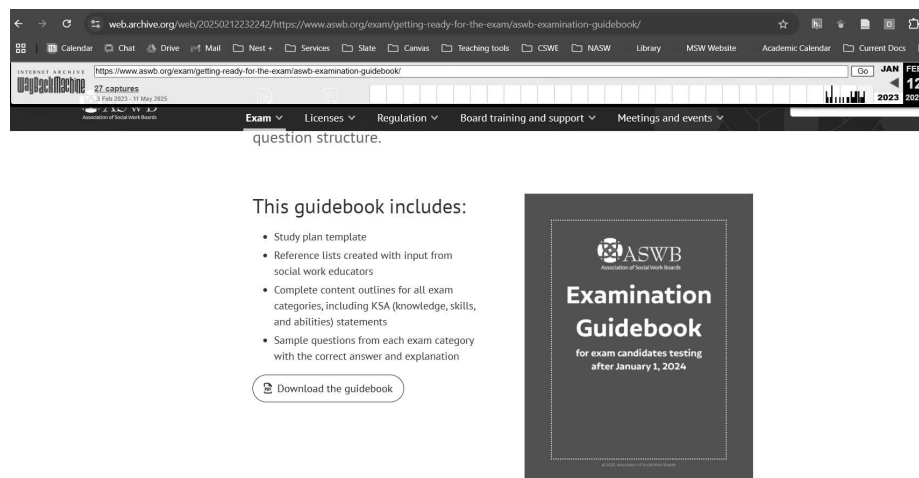
ASWB produced two Exam Guidebooks in 2025

According to the March 11, 2025 screenshot from the Internet Archive, the PSI guidebook is valid until March 16, 2025, ASWB exams took a two week break, and the PearsonVUE guidebook is valid after March 30, 2025.



<https://web.archive.org/web/20250311234238/https://www.aswb.org/exam/getting-ready-for-the-exam/aswb-examination-guidebook/>

Back in this February 12, 2025 , there was one set of policies:



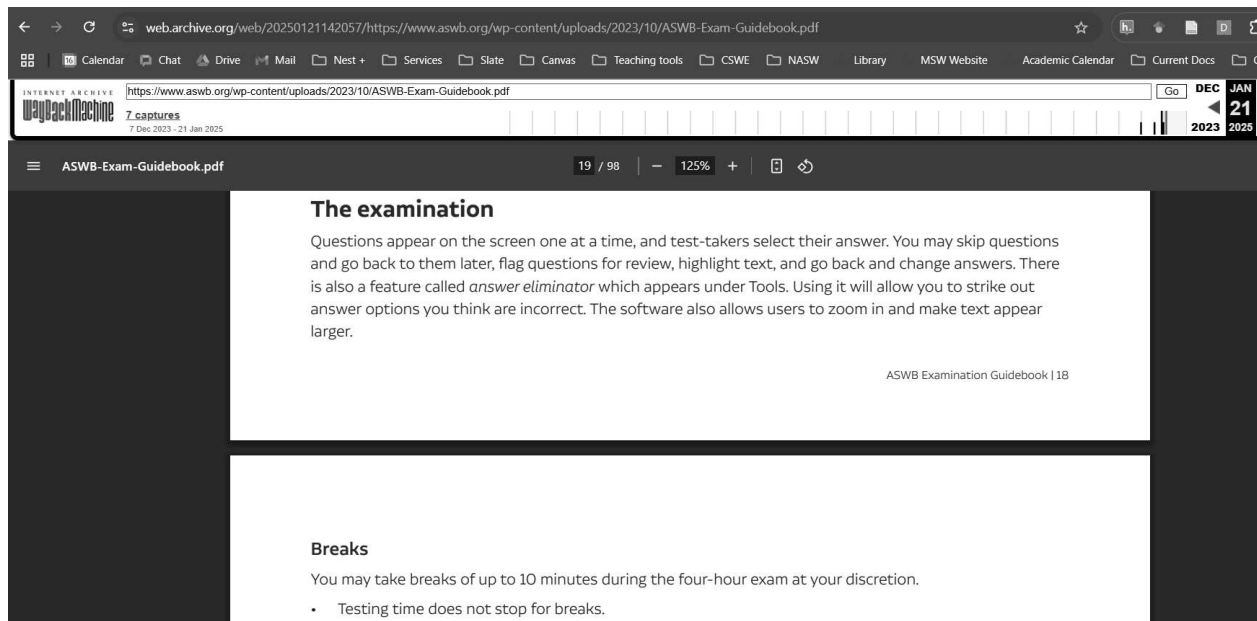
<https://web.archive.org/web/20250212232242/https://www.aswb.org/exam/getting-ready-for-the-exam/aswb-examination-guidebook/>

Exam Policy Rule Set # 1

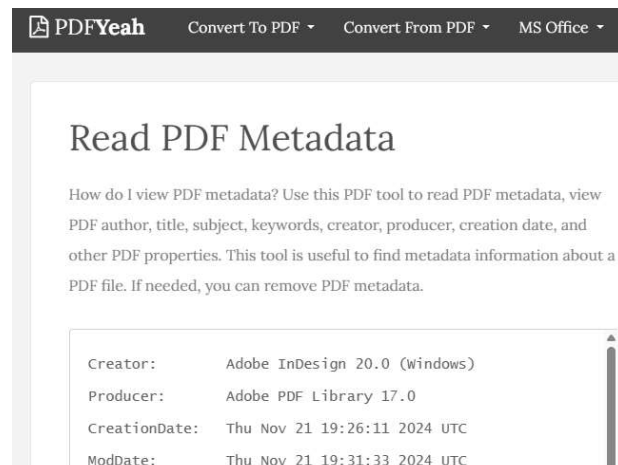
(aswb.org/.../2023/10/ASWB-Exam-Guidebook.pdf)

- Valid through October 2024-March 16, 2025
- “You may skip questions and go back to them later, flag questions for review, highlight text, and go back and change answers”
- “You may take breaks of up to 10 minutes during the four-hour exam at your discretion. Testing time does not stop for breaks.”

Archived January 21, 2025 by web.archive.org.



<https://web.archive.org/web/20250121142057/https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ASWB-Exam-Guidebook.pdf>



This version of the handbook accurately described the exam as occurring in a single, uninterrupted period. Examinees could take informal breaks. However, the clock would continue to run, and the full length of the exam would remain accessible for review.

This file was created on November 21, 2024. Accessing the same file in 2025 from the ASWB website, it looks very different!

Sneak-Revision: ASWB revised & reuploaded (2023/10/ASWB-Exam-Guidebook.pdf) in April 2025

This is how the Exam Guidebook for this period currently appears on ASWB's website.

The examination

The exam is divided into two 85-question sections, each of which has a two-hour time limit. Questions appear on the screen one at a time, and test-takers select their answer. The software allows users to zoom in and make text appear larger. A help screen is available during the entire exam.

Within each section, you may skip questions and go back to them later, mark questions for review, highlight and strike through text, and go back and change answers. After you have completed the first section, you will not be able to return to it.

Breaks

There are two types of optional breaks that you may take during your exam, a scheduled 10-minute break and unscheduled breaks.

All breaks

- During breaks, you may leave the testing room only to visit the closest restroom and access a drink and snack.
- Take your photo ID with you on breaks.
- Be courteous to other test-takers at the test center.
- You will not be allowed to leave the building.

Scheduled break

- You will be given two hours for each 85-question section of the exam. If your time ends for a section, your answers will be automatically recorded, and you will not be able to go back to those questions.
- If you complete an 85-question section before the two-hour time limit has ended, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit your answers.

Source: <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ASWB-Exam-Guidebook.pdf>

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Read PDF Metadata

How do I view PDF metadata? Use this PDF tool to read PDF metadata, view PDF author, title, subject, keywords, creator, producer, creation date, and other PDF properties. This tool is useful to find metadata information about a PDF file. If needed, you can remove PDF metadata.

Creator:	Adobe InDesign 20.2 (Windows)
Producer:	Adobe PDF Library 17.0
CreationDate:	Mon Apr 14 20:23:08 2025 CEST
ModDate:	Mon Apr 14 20:25:30 2025 CEST

Using the PDF metadata, it is clear that ASWB included language about exam halves and breaks after the policies went into effect.

I believe ASWB used the same file names when retroactively documenting these changes to obscure their potential impact to test-takers, boards, and other stakeholders.

The Internet Archive has not crawled the ASWB Exam Guidebook from January 21, 2025-May 16, 2025. I am unable to verify when the version of the Exam Guidebook created on April 14, 2025 was shared with the public prior to when I downloaded it on May 16, 2025.

Exam Policy Rule Set # 2

([aswb.org/.../2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20250406162401/https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf))

- Presented to test-takers for Pearson VUE between February 28, 2025 and April 14, 2025.
- “You may skip questions and go back to them later, flag questions for review, highlight text, and go back and change answers”
- “There are two types of breaks that you may take during your exam, a scheduled 10-minute break and unscheduled breaks.”
- **“You will be given the entire exam time** at the beginning of the test.”
- **“There are no individually timed sections,** so manage your time accordingly.”

Here is how ASWB’s Exam Guidebook appears in the April 6, 2025 snapshot in the Internet Archive:

The examination

Questions appear on the screen one at a time, and test-takers select their answer. You may skip questions and go back to them later, mark questions for review, highlight and strike through text, and go back and change answers. The software allows users to zoom in and make text appear larger. A help screen is available during the entire exam.

Breaks

There are two types of breaks that you may take during your exam, a scheduled 10-minute break and unscheduled breaks.

All breaks

- During breaks, you may leave the testing room only to visit the closest restroom and access a drink and snack.
- Take your photo ID with you on breaks.
- Be courteous to other test-takers at the test center.
- You will not be allowed to leave the building.

Scheduled break

- The exam is divided into two sections. You will be given the entire exam time at the beginning of the test. There are no individually timed sections, so manage your time accordingly.
- After you complete the first section, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit them.
- You will then have the option of taking a scheduled break, during which the clock will stop for a maximum of 10 minutes.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20250406162401/https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf>

Sneak-Revision: ASWB revised & reuploaded (2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf) in April 2025

The Exam Guidebook PDF crawled by the Internet Archive on April 6, 2025 was created on February 26, 2025 and last edited on April 2, 2025.

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Read PDF Metadata

How do I view PDF metadata? Use this PDF tool to read PDF metadata, view PDF author, title, subject, keywords, creator, producer, creation date, and other PDF properties. This tool is useful to find metadata information about a PDF file. If needed, you can remove PDF metadata.

Creator:	Adobe InDesign 20.1 (windows)
Producer:	Adobe PDF Library 17.0
CreationDate:	Wed Feb 26 17:33:02 2025 UTC
ModDate:	Wed Apr 2 15:14:11 2025 UTC

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Read PDF Metadata

How do I view PDF metadata? Use this PDF tool to read PDF metadata, view PDF author, title, subject, keywords, creator, producer, creation date, and other PDF properties. This tool is useful to find metadata information about a PDF file. If needed, you can remove PDF metadata.

Creator:	Adobe InDesign 20.2 (windows)
Producer:	Adobe PDF Library 17.0
CreationDate:	Mon Apr 14 18:23:08 2025 UTC
ModDate:	Mon Apr 14 18:25:30 2025 UTC

The same file, downloaded from ASWB's website on May 15, 2025, was created on April 14, 2025.

This is the same day that ASWB's deprecated documentation was changed to align with the April 10, 2025 announcement of exam administration policy changes.

April 14, 2025 was a busy day for ASWB. They created and modified two new exam guidebooks, which are now available on their website. No revision date is visible on either document.

Exam Policy Rule Set # 3

([aswb.org/.../2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf](https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf))

- Presented to test-takers for Pearson VUE between April 14, 2025 and today
- “The exam is divided into two 85-question sections, **each of which has a two-hour time limit.**”
- “After you have completed the first section, **you will not be able to return to it.**”

The examination

The exam is divided into two 85-question sections, each of which has a two-hour time limit. Questions appear on the screen one at a time, and test-takers select their answer. The software allows users to zoom in and make text appear larger. A help screen is available during the entire exam.

Within each section, you may skip questions and go back to them later, mark questions for review, highlight and strike through text, and go back and change answers. After you have completed the first section, you will not be able to return to it.

Breaks

There are two types of optional breaks that you may take during your exam, a scheduled 10-minute break and unscheduled breaks.

All breaks

- During breaks, you may leave the testing room only to visit the closest restroom and access a drink and snack.
- Take your photo ID with you on breaks.
- Be courteous to other test-takers at the test center.
- You will not be allowed to leave the building.

Scheduled break

- You will be given two hours for each 85-question section of the exam. If your time ends for a section, your answers will be automatically recorded, and you will not be able to go back to those questions.
- If you complete an 85-question section before the two-hour time limit has ended, you will be prompted to review and submit your answers for that section. You will no longer have access to those questions after you submit your answers.

- After the first section is complete, you will have the option of taking a scheduled break, during which the clock will stop for a maximum of 10 minutes. If you choose not to take the break, you may end the break immediately.
- You may take less than 10 minutes for your scheduled break. Any remaining break time, however, will not extend the amount of time allocated for answering the remaining exam questions.
- It is important to return on time from the scheduled break and to allow time for the exam proctor to readmit you into the exam room. If you take more than 10 minutes for this scheduled break, the excess time will be taken out of your exam time.
- When the break has expired, the exam clock automatically begins again. The second section has 85 questions, numbered 1 to 85. You will have two hours to complete the second section.

<https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-ASWB-Examination-Guidebook-Pearson-VUE.pdf>

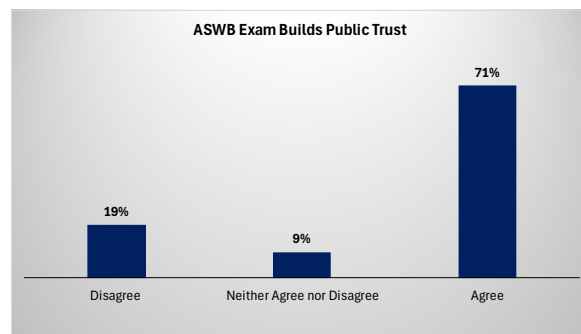
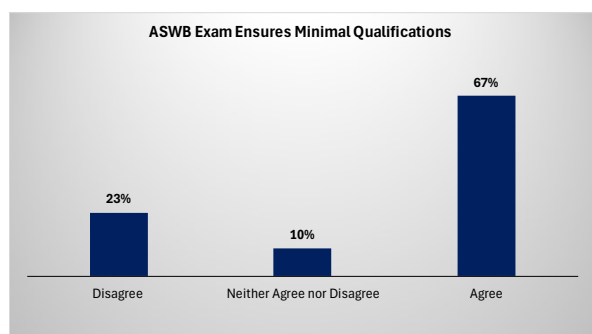
Results in Brief

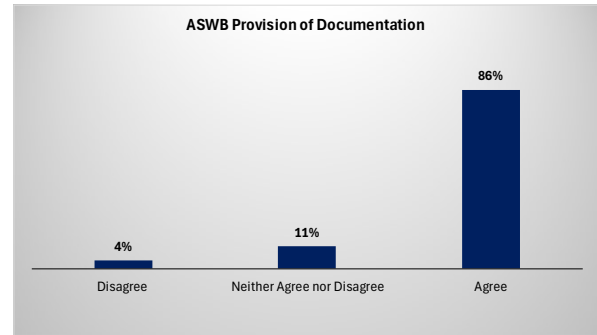
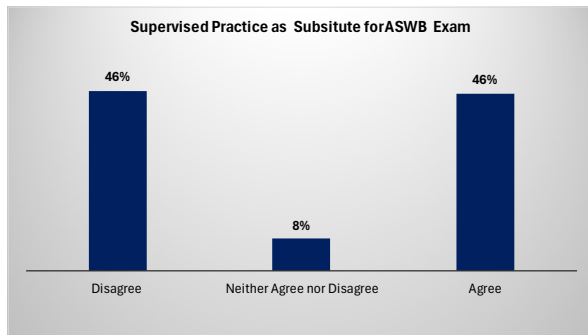
This brief contains the results of the 2025 Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) Licensure Requirements Survey. In total, 9,044 respondents participated in this survey. The Virginia Department of Health Professions' Healthcare Workforce Data Center (HWDC) administered this survey to pending and active licensed clinical social workers, licensed master social workers, licensed baccalaureate social workers, and supervision registrants in a two-week period from late June to early July of 2025. This survey aimed to document participants' perspectives on LCSW licensure requirements.

The median age of the respondents was between 40-49 years. Additionally, the majority (87%) were female, while 13% were male. Over half (60%) were White, 29% were Black, and approximately 5% were Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 2% were Asian or some other race. In terms of highest degree attained, 73% of the respondents held a master's degree with a micro concentration while another 25% held a master's degree with a macro concentration, 1% held a PhD in social work, and less than 1% held a bachelor's in social work. Approximately 61% obtained their degree within the past 15 years while an additional 38% obtained their degree at least 16 years ago. Finally, of those who responded to this survey, approximately 24% were board-approved supervisors. Approximately 59% were currently providing supervision.

Respondents answered a series of questions about current licensing requirements, the timeline to complete these requirements, and if alternative pathways should be made available to applicants. The majority (70%) responded that Virginia should maintain the Association of Social Work Board (ASWB)'s clinical examination as a requirement for the LCSW Licensure. However, half responded that the timeline for passing LSCW exam (within 2 years) should be lengthened. Furthermore, 50% thought that MSWs should be allowed more than 4 years to complete their supervision requirements for their LCSW licensure. Finally, in terms of alternative pathways to LCSW licensure, 34% did not think an alternative pathway should be allowed. However, 30% stated that an alternative pathway should be allowed and the pathway should not require failing the exam. Approximately 22% stated that an alternative pathway should be allowed after two failed ASWB attempts, and an additional 14% thought an alternative pathway should be allowed after one failed ASWB attempt.

The survey also included a series of statements and asked participants to indicate their level of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). When asked about the ASWB ensuring that social workers met minimum qualifications, 66% agreed that it did; 24% disagreed and 10% neither agreed nor disagreed. Respondents also were asked about the extent to which they agreed that the exam built public trust in social workers' competency 71% agreed with the statement whereas 19% disagreed. Approximately 9% neither agreed nor disagreed. Feelings about supervised practice as a substitute for the clinical examination was also assessed; 46% disagreed with the statement and 46% agreed with the statement. Approximately 8% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Finally, respondents were asked if the ASWB and its member boards should provide documentation about the exam's validity reliability and psychometrics. The vast majority (85%) of respondents agreed with this statement; approximately 4% either disagreed with the statement. About 11% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

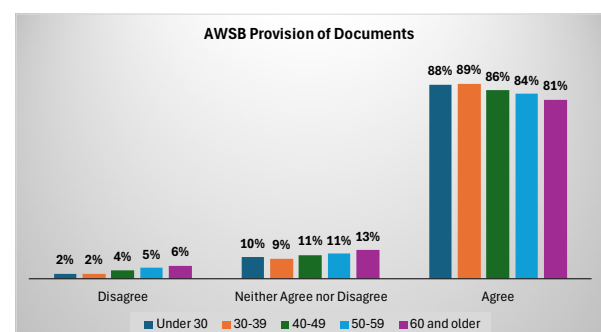
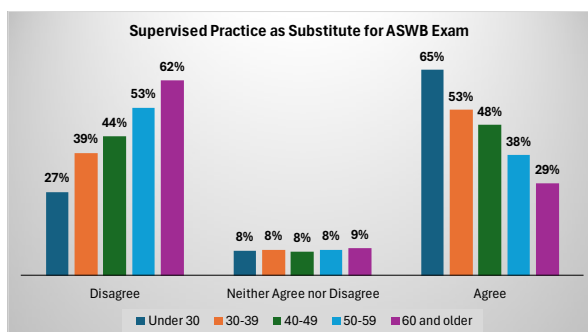
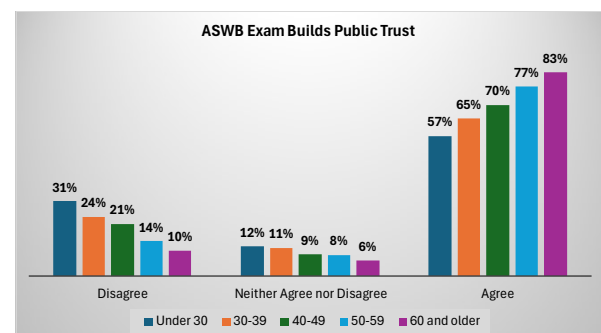
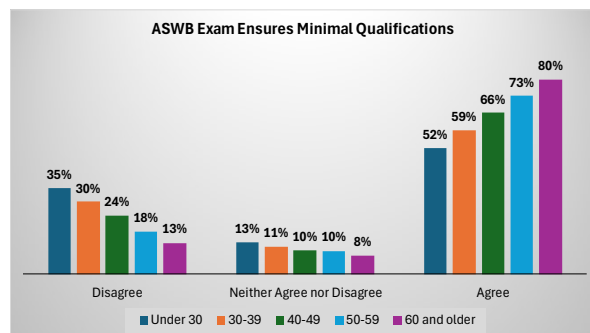




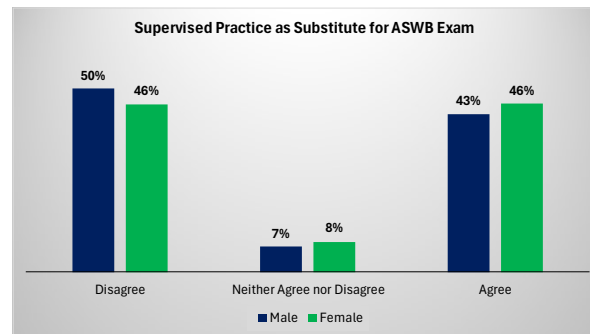
Results by Demographics, Educational Attainment, and Supervisors

Demographics

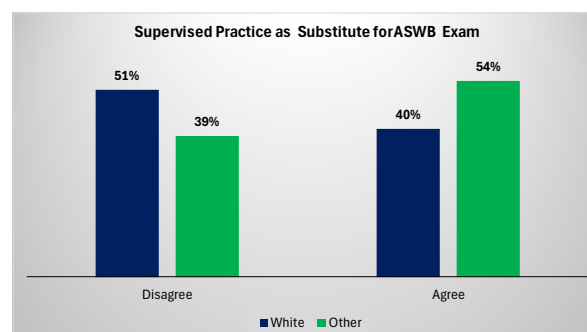
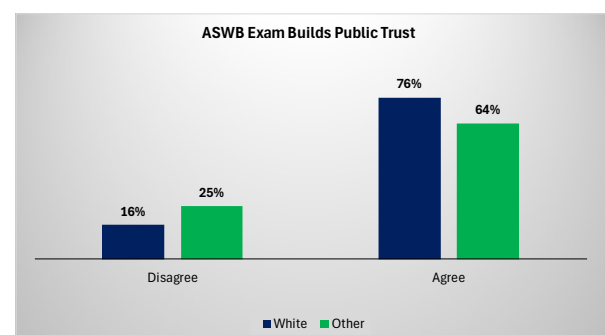
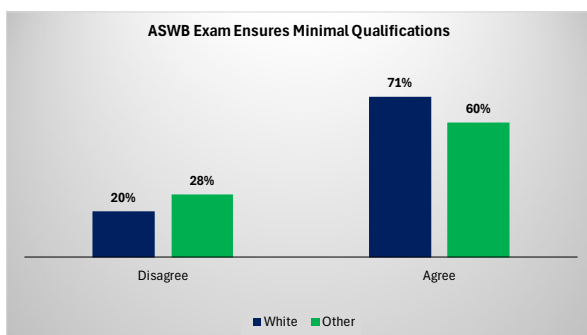
The results were also broken down by demographic characteristics. Older LCSW were more likely to be in favor of Virginia maintaining the ASWB requirement. In terms of age, as age increased so did the percentage of LCSWs who thought Virginia should maintain the ASWB requirement (47% of those under 30 vs 86% of those 60+). Additionally, as age increased, so did the percentage of those who thought no alternative pathway to licensure should be allowed (16% of those under 30 vs 50% of those 60+). Additionally, higher percentages of older LCSWs agree that the exam ensures minimal qualifications are met and that it builds public trust. On the other hand, a higher percentage of younger LCSWs agree that supervised practice can be a substitute for the clinical exam.



In terms of differences by sex, a slightly higher percentage of males agreed with maintaining the exam (72% vs 69%) and having no alternative pathway to licensure (40% vs 33%) when compared to females. While similar percentages of males and females agreed the statements on the exam ensuring minimal qualifications and building public trust, a higher percentage of males disagreed with supervised practice as a substitute for the exam when compared to females (50% vs 46%).

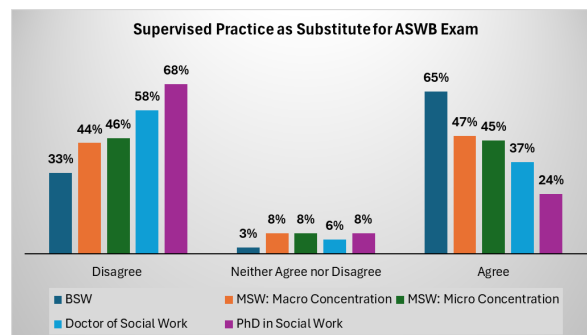
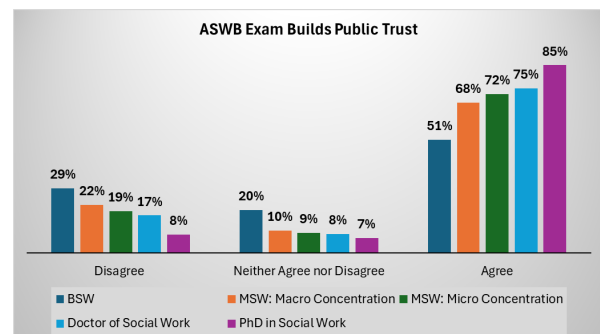
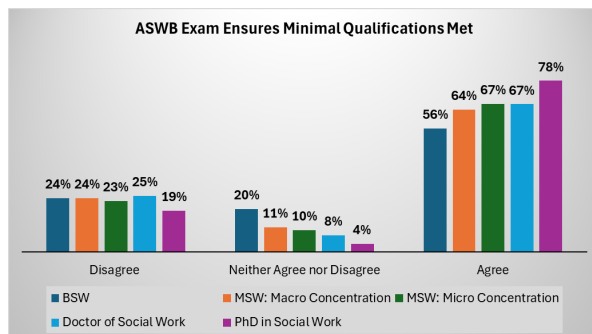


When examining results by race and ethnicity, a higher percentage of white respondents were in favor of maintaining the ASWB requirement (75% vs 62%) when compared to other races. Additionally, a higher percentage of white respondents thought that no alternative pathway to licensure should be allowed (39% vs 27%). A higher percentage of other race respondents thought the exam timeline should be lengthened (56% vs 45%). Regarding the ASWB ensuring minimal qualifications were met, a greater percentage of white respondents agreed when compared to other race respondents (71% vs 60%). A similar pattern was found with the statement that the exam building public trust with a higher percentage of white respondents agreeing (76% vs 64%). A higher percentage of other race respondents agreed that supervised practice could substitute the exam (54% vs 40%).



Educational Attainment

Educational attainment also played a role in respondents' perspectives. As educational attainment increased, so did the percentage of those who thought the ASWB requirement should be maintained. Similarly, a higher percentage of those with a PhD in social work thought that no alternative licensure pathway should be allowed (50% vs 34%) compared to all other degrees. With regards to the ASWB ensuring minimal qualifications, as educational attainment increased so did the percentage of respondents indicating they agreed with the statements (56% of BSWs vs 78% of PhDs). A similar pattern was found in terms of the ASWB building public trust in social workers' competency (51% of BSWs vs 85% of PhDs). Further, as educational attainment increased, there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents agreeing that supervised practice could substitute the clinical exam (65% of BSWs vs 24% of PhDs).



Supervisors

Finally, the responses of supervisors were also examined. A higher percentage of supervisors thought that the ASWB exam requirement should be maintained (88% vs 64%) when compared to non-supervisors. Half of supervisors also thought that no alternative pathway should be allowed as compared to 29% of non-supervisors, and a lower percentage of supervisors think that the timeline to pass the ASWB exam should be lengthened as compared to non-supervisors (41% vs 52%). The majority (80%) of supervisors agreed that the exam ensures minimal qualifications are met as compared to non-supervisors (62%). Additionally, a higher percentage of supervisors agreed that the exam builds public trust in social workers' competency compared to non-supervisors (84% vs 67%). Finally, the majority of supervisors disagreed that supervised practice could be a substitute for the clinical exam (63% vs 41%) when compared to non-supervisors.

