



CONTENT OUTLINES AND KSAS

Advanced Generalist Social Work Licensing Examination

What are KSAs?

A KSA is a “knowledge, skills, and abilities” statement. These statements describe the discrete knowledge components that may be tested in each part of the examination, and are the basis for individual test questions.

ASWB Examination program

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Advanced Generalist Examination

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 23%

IA. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Theories of human development throughout the lifespan (e.g., physical, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral)
- The indicators of normal and abnormal physical, cognitive, emotional, and sexual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of sexual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of spiritual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of racial, ethnic, and cultural development throughout the lifespan
- The effects of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities throughout the lifespan
- Basic human needs
- The principles of attachment and bonding
- The effect of aging on biopsychosocial functioning
- The impact of aging parents on adult children
- Gerontology
- Personality theories
- Theories of conflict
- Factors influencing self-image (e.g., culture, race, religion/spirituality, age, disability, trauma)
- Parenting skills and capacities
- Feminist theory
- Addiction theories and concepts
- Systems and ecological perspectives and theories
- Strengths-based and resilience theories
- Crisis intervention theories
- Psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches
- Indicators and dynamics of abuse and neglect throughout the lifespan

IB. FUNCTIONING OF VARIOUS SYSTEMS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The family life cycle
- Family dynamics and functioning and the effects on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Models of family life education in social work practice
- Theories of couples development
- Theories of group development and functioning

IC. EFFECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON SYSTEMS' BEHAVIOR

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Person-in-Environment (PIE) theory
- The interplay of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors
- The dynamics of interpersonal relationships
- Psychological defense mechanisms and their effects on behavior and relationships
- The indicators of psychosocial stress
- The effect of poverty on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of the environment (e.g., social, physical, cultural, political, economic) on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Role theories
- Social and economic justice
- The impact of globalization on clients/client systems (e.g., interrelatedness of systems, international integration, technology, environmental or financial crises, epidemics)

ID. DIVERSITY, DISCRIMINATION, AND STEREOTYPES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The effect of disability on biopsychosocial functioning throughout the lifespan
- The effect of culture, race, and ethnicity on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The effects of discrimination and stereotypes on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The influence of sexual orientation on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The impact of transgender and transitioning process on behaviors, attitudes, identity, and relationships
- Systemic (institutionalized) discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism, ageism)
- The principles of culturally competent social work practice
- Sexual orientation concepts
- Gender and gender identity concepts

II. INTERVENTION PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES FOR USE ACROSS SYSTEMS

32%

IIA. BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AND COLLATERAL DATA

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The components of a biopsychosocial assessment
- The components and function of the mental status examination
- Biopsychosocial responses to illness and disability
- Biopsychosocial factors related to mental health
- Basic medical terminology
- The indicators of mental and emotional illness throughout the lifespan
- Co-occurring disorders and conditions
- Symptoms of neurologic and organic disorders
- The types of information available from other sources (e.g., agency, employment, medical, psychological, legal, or school records)
- The impact of caregiving on families
- The dynamics and effects of loss, separation, and grief
- The impact of physical and mental illness on family dynamics

IIA. BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AND COLLATERAL DATA (continued)

- The indicators of behavioral dysfunction
- The indicators of feigning illness
- The indicators of somatization
- Body image and its impact (e.g., identity, self-esteem, relationships, habits)
- The indicators of traumatic stress and violence
- The effects of life events, stressors, and crises on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of out-of-home placement (e.g., hospitalization, foster care, residential care, criminal justice system) on clients/client systems
- The impact of out-of-home displacement (e.g., natural disaster, homelessness, immigration) on clients/client systems
- The indicators and risk factors of the client's/client system's danger to self and others
- The impact of stress, trauma, and violence
- The effects of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The indicators, dynamics, and impact of exploitation across the lifespan (e.g., financial, immigration status, sexual trafficking)
- The characteristics of perpetrators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- The indicators of addiction and substance abuse
- The effects of addiction and substance abuse on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Criminal justice systems
- Common psychotropic and non-psychotropic prescriptions and over-the-counter medications and their side effects

IIB. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The factors and processes used in problem formulation
- Methods of involving clients/client systems in problem identification (e.g., gathering collateral information)
- Techniques and instruments used to assess clients/client systems
- Methods to incorporate the results of psychological and educational tests into assessment
- Methods to assess ego strengths
- Methods to assess organizational functioning (e.g., agency assessments)
- Methods to obtain sensitive information (e.g., substance abuse, sexual abuse)
- Communication theories and styles
- Risk assessment methods
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's strengths, resources, and challenges (e.g., individual, family, group, organization, community)
- The indicators of motivation, resistance, and readiness to change
- Methods to assess motivation, resistance, and readiness to change
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's communication skills
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's coping abilities
- The indicators of the client's/client system's strengths and challenges

IIB. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES (continued)

- Methods used to assess trauma
- Placement options based on assessed level of care
- The use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association

IIC. INTERVENTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles and techniques of interviewing (e.g., supporting, clarifying, focusing, confronting, validating, feedback, reflecting, language differences, use of interpreters, redirecting)
- Methods to involve clients/client systems in intervention planning
- Cultural considerations in the creation of an intervention plan
- The criteria used in the selection of intervention/treatment modalities (e.g., client/client system abilities, culture, life stage)
- The components of intervention, treatment, and service plans
- Psychotherapies
- The impact of immigration, refugee, or undocumented status on service delivery
- Discharge, aftercare, and follow-up planning
- The phases of intervention and treatment
- The client's/client system's role in the problem-solving process
- Problem-solving models and approaches (e.g., brief, solution-focused methods or techniques)
- Methods to engage and motivate clients/client systems
- Methods to engage and work with involuntary clients/client systems
- Methods to obtain and provide feedback
- The principles of active listening and observation
- Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- The concept of congruence in communication
- Limit setting techniques
- The technique of role play
- Role modeling techniques
- Techniques for harm reduction for self and others
- Methods to teach coping and other self-care skills to clients/client systems
- Client/client system self-monitoring techniques
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Crisis intervention and treatment approaches
- Theories of trauma-informed care
- Methods and approaches to trauma-informed care
- Anger management techniques
- Stress management techniques
- Cognitive and behavioral interventions
- Strengths-based and empowerment strategies and interventions
- Client/client system contracting and goal-setting techniques
- Partializing techniques
- Assertiveness training

IIC. INTERVENTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION (continued)

- Task-centered approaches
- Psychoeducation methods (e.g., acknowledging, supporting, normalizing)
- Group work techniques and approaches (e.g., developing and managing group processes and cohesion)
- Family therapy models, interventions, and approaches
- Couples interventions and treatment approaches
- Permanency planning
- Mindfulness and complementary therapeutic approaches
- Techniques used for follow-up
- Techniques used to evaluate a client's/client system's progress
- The indicators of client/client system readiness for termination
- Consultation approaches (e.g., referrals to specialists)
- Methods to assess the availability of community resources

III. INTERVENTION PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES FOR USE WITH LARGER SYSTEMS 18%

IIIA. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Methods to establish program objectives and outcomes
- Methods of service delivery
- Methods to establish service networks or community resources
- The effects of program evaluation findings on services
- Methods to evaluate agency programs (e.g., needs assessment, formative/summative assessment, cost effectiveness, cost-benefit analysis, outcomes assessment)
- The principles and features of objective and subjective data
- Basic and applied research design and methods
- Data collection and analysis methods
- Methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research
- Methods to develop and evaluate measurable objectives for client/client system intervention, treatment, and/or service plans
- Methods, techniques, and instruments used to evaluate social work practice
- Evidence-based practice

IIIB. METHODS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Theories of social change and community development
- Community organizing and social planning methods
- Techniques for mobilizing community participation
- The impact of social institutions on society
- The impact of the political environment on policy-making
- Concepts of social policy development and analysis
- Techniques to inform and influence organizational and social policy
- Theories and methods of advocacy for policies, services, and resources to meet clients'/client systems' needs
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies

IIIC. SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Governance structures
- Theories of organizational development and structure
- The effects of policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation on social work practice and service delivery
- Leadership and management techniques
- Fiscal management techniques
- Fund-raising and development
- Asset-building approaches (e.g., collaborative relationships, human capital, resources)
- The relationship between formal and informal power structures in the decision-making process
- Educational components, techniques, and methods of supervision
- Methods to identify learning needs and develop learning objectives for supervisees
- Case recording for practice evaluation or supervision
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures for social worker safety
- Models of supervision and consultation (e.g., individual, peer, group)
- The supervisee's role in supervision (e.g., identifying learning needs, self-assessment, prioritizing, etc.)
- Employee recruitment, training, retention, performance appraisal, evaluation, and discipline
- The impact of transference and countertransference within supervisory relationships
- The components of a safe and positive work environment
- The components of case management
- The elements of a case presentation
- Time management approaches
- Methods of networking
- The process of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary team collaboration
- The basic terminology of professions other than social work (e.g., legal, educational)
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures that minimize risk for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Methods to develop, review, and implement crisis plans
- Quality assurance, including program reviews and audits
- Accreditation and/or licensing requirements
- Professional development activities to improve practice and maintain current professional knowledge (e.g., in-service training, licensing requirements, reviews of literature, workshops)

IIID. RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles of case recording, documentation, and management of practice records
- The elements of client/client system reports
- The principles and processes for developing formal documents (e.g., proposals, letters, brochures, pamphlets, reports, evaluations)

IV. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, VALUES, AND ETHICS

27%

IVA. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICAL ISSUES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Legal and/or ethical issues related to the practice of social work, including responsibility to clients/client systems, colleagues, the profession, and society
- Professional values and principles (e.g., competence, social justice, integrity, and dignity and worth of the person)
- Techniques to identify and resolve ethical dilemmas
- Client/client system competence and self-determination (e.g., financial decisions, treatment decisions, emancipation, age of consent, permanency planning)
- Techniques for protecting and enhancing client/client system self-determination
- The client's/client system's right to refuse services (e.g., medication, medical treatment, counseling, placement, etc.)
- Professional boundaries in the social worker-client/client system relationship (e.g., power differences, conflicts of interest, etc.)
- Ethical issues related to dual relationships
- Professional objectivity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- Self-disclosure principles and applications
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding documentation
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding termination
- Legal and/or ethical issues related to death and dying
- Research ethics (e.g., institutional review boards, use of human subjects, informed consent)
- Ethical issues in supervision and management

IVB. CONFIDENTIALITY

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles and processes of obtaining informed consent
- The use of client/client system records
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic information security
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding mandatory reporting (e.g., abuse, threat of harm, impaired professionals, etc.)

IVC. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SELF

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The components of the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The social worker's role in the problem-solving process
- Methods to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and client/client system in the intervention process
- The principles and techniques for building and maintaining a helping relationship
- The concept of acceptance and empathy in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The dynamics of power and transparency in the social worker-client/client system relationship

IVC. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SELF (continued)

- The impact of transference and countertransference in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The impact of domestic, intimate partner, and other violence on the helping relationship
- The dynamics of diversity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The effect of the client's developmental level on the social worker-client relationship
- Social worker self-care principles and techniques
- Burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on interdisciplinary collaboration