



CONTENT OUTLINES AND KSAS

Bachelors 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

Bachelors Examination

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 25%

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
- The interplay of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors
- 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)
- Body image and its impact (e.g., identity, self-esteem, relationships, habits)
- Parenting skills and capacities

IB. HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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
- Theories of couples development
- The impact of physical and mental illness on family dynamics
- Psychological defense mechanisms and their effects on behavior and relationships
- Addiction theories and concepts
- Systems and ecological perspectives and theories
- Role theories
- Theories of group development and functioning
- Theories of social change and community development
- The dynamics of interpersonal relationships
- Models of family life education in social work practice
- Strengths-based and resilience theories

IC. DIVERSITY, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC JUSTICE, AND OPPRESSION

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

- Feminist theory
- 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
- The impact of social institutions on society
- 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
- Person-in-Environment (PIE) theory
- Social and economic justice
- Criminal justice systems
- The effects of life events, stressors, and crises on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of the political environment on policy-making

II. ASSESSMENT

29%

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
- The indicators of psychosocial stress
- Basic medical terminology
- The indicators of mental and emotional illness throughout the lifespan
- The types of information available from other sources (e.g., agency, employment, medical, psychological, legal, or school records)

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

IIB. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES (continued)

- Communication theories and styles
- The concept of congruence in communication
- 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
- Methods used to assess trauma
- Placement options based on assessed level of care
- The effects of addiction and substance abuse on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The indicators of addiction and substance abuse
- Co-occurring disorders and conditions
- The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association
- The indicators of behavioral dysfunction
- The indicators of somatization
- The indicators of feigning illness
- Common psychotropic and non-psychotropic prescriptions and over-the-counter medications and their side effects

IIC. CONCEPTS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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

- Indicators and dynamics of abuse and neglect throughout the lifespan
- 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

III. INTERVENTIONS WITH CLIENTS/CLIENT SYSTEMS

26%

IIIA. INDICATORS AND EFFECTS OF CRISIS AND CHANGE

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

- The impact of out-of-home placement (e.g., hospitalization, foster care, residential care, criminal justice system) on clients/client systems
- The impact of stress, trauma, and violence
- Theories of trauma-informed care
- Crisis intervention theories
- The indicators of traumatic stress and violence
- The impact of out-of-home displacement (e.g., natural disaster, homelessness, immigration) on clients/client systems

IIIA. INDICATORS AND EFFECTS OF CRISIS AND CHANGE (continued)

- The indicators and risk factors of the client's/client system's danger to self and others
- Methods and approaches to trauma-informed care
- The impact of caregiving on families
- The dynamics and effects of loss, separation, and grief

IIIB. INTERVENTION PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES

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 principles and techniques for building and maintaining a helping relationship
- 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
- Limit setting techniques
- The technique of role play
- Role modeling techniques
- Methods to obtain sensitive information (e.g., substance abuse, sexual abuse)
- 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 to develop, review, and implement crisis plans
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Crisis intervention and treatment approaches
- 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

IIIB. INTERVENTION PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES (continued)

- Partializing techniques
- Assertiveness training
- 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
- Permanency planning
- Mindfulness and complementary therapeutic approaches
- The components of case management
- Techniques used for follow-up
- The elements of a case presentation
- Methods of service delivery
- Concepts of social policy development and analysis
- Theories and methods of advocacy for policies, services, and resources to meet clients'/client systems' needs
- Community organizing and social planning methods
- Techniques for mobilizing community participation
- Methods to develop and evaluate measurable objectives for client/client system intervention, treatment, and/or service plans
- Techniques used to evaluate a client's/client system's progress
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures that minimize risk for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of domestic, intimate partner, and other violence on the helping relationship
- The indicators of client/client system readiness for termination
- Methods, techniques, and instruments used to evaluate social work practice
- Evidence-based practice

IIIC. USE OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

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

- The basic terminology of professions other than social work (e.g., legal, educational)
- The effect of the client's developmental level on the social worker-client relationship
- Methods to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and client/client system in the intervention process
- Consultation approaches (e.g., referrals to specialists)
- Methods of networking
- The process of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary team collaboration
- Methods to assess the availability of community resources
- Methods to establish service networks or community resources
- The effects of policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation on social work practice and service delivery
- The relationship between formal and informal power structures in the decision-making process

IIID. DOCUMENTATION

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)
- The principles and features of objective and subjective data

IV. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, VALUES, AND ETHICS

20%

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, dignity and worth of the person)
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The dynamics of diversity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- 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.)
- The dynamics of power and transparency in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- Professional boundaries in the social worker-client/client system relationship (e.g., power differences, conflicts of interest, etc.)
- Ethical issues related to dual relationships
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding mandatory reporting (e.g., abuse, threat of harm, impaired professionals, etc.)
- 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
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures for social worker safety

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

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
- The concept of acceptance and empathy in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The impact of transference and countertransference in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- Social worker self-care principles and techniques
- Burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue
- The components of a safe and positive work environment
- Professional objectivity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- Self-disclosure principles and applications
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on interdisciplinary collaboration
- Governance structures
- Accreditation and/or licensing requirements
- Time management approaches
- 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.)
- The impact of transference and countertransference within supervisory relationships
- Professional development activities to improve practice and maintain current professional knowledge (e.g., in-service training, licensing requirements, reviews of literature, workshops)