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## **2.1 PROCEDURES**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The fiduciary responsibility of the Association to its Member Boards demands that it maintain the validity, reliability, and security of the social work licensing examinations. Because an examination is valid only for its intended purpose, it is also the responsibility of the Association to define the purpose of each examination and support the appropriate use of the examinations by its Member Boards.

### **POLICY:**

1. Only the Association and its Member Boards may authorize the use of Association examinations.
2. The Association will set standards for its examinations and shall establish test administration policies and procedures that shall be followed by all entities involved with the examination process.
3. Under the ASWB bylaws, Member Boards are required to comply with the examination policies to the extent an entry-level examination is required by law as a prerequisite to licensure. ASWB's Chief Executive Officer is authorized to execute contracts with jurisdictions for use of the Association's examinations if required by state or provincial law.
4. For purposes of evaluating candidates for licensure, Member Boards shall rely only on the official examination score reports available weekly as direct score reports or by way of official score transfers provided by ASWB. Candidates receive an unofficial score report after they complete their examinations. Score reports submitted directly by candidates are not official and are not acceptable for licensure purposes.
5. The testing service selected for the test administration shall enter into a contract with the Association. Standard ASWB examinations will be provided in an electronic testing format at centers acceptable to the Association in regard to location, staffing, and security.
  - a. "Standard ASWB examinations" mean that exams are provided in an electronic testing format and test-takers are given four hours to complete the exam. The testing appointment includes 30 minutes for checking in and being seated. The total appointment time for standard ASWB examinations is four hours and 30 minutes.
6. Any ASWB Member Board may request that a representative of the Association present an overview of the examination development and administrative processes to familiarize the board with the defensibility and validity issues of the examination program. If it is deemed not to pose a threat to examination security or validity, or to provide the basis for any other legal risks, the ASWB Board of Directors may, upon request, allow an ASWB Member Board to review an examination under secure conditions.
7. The categories of examinations offered shall be determined from the results of a practice analysis conducted every five to seven years.

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8. The fee for the examinations shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the Delegate Assembly. Examination fees are paid by candidates at the time of their registration to test with ASWB.
9. Candidates may test no more frequently than every 90 days. A maximum of two (2) waivers per candidate every twelve (12) months may be permitted per examination category. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis in the following circumstances:
  - a. when there has been serious, documented malfunction with administration of the examination
  - b. when a candidate requests to take an examination in a different examination category. This excludes switching between the Associate and Bachelors examinations, which share the same content.
  - c. where permitted by a Member Board, when the candidate's raw score on the most recent examination is within ten (10) test items of the passing score. The exception must be approved by ASWB. Candidates must submit a completed waiver form. ASWB may request additional documentation as needed.
10. ASWB will make necessary provisions for nonstandard testing arrangements according to applicable federal, state, provincial, and local legislation including but not limited to applicable law related to individuals with disabilities in the United States and human rights legislation in Canada. All nonstandard testing arrangements require approval of the Association and must not fundamentally alter the exam or jeopardize exam security. The Association will make every reasonable effort to accommodate test candidates who have disabilities, health conditions, or other needs as defined in Policy 2.7, Nonstandard testing arrangements for persons with disabilities, health conditions, or other needs.
11. ASWB staff and Member Board staff and board members may request to sit for an ASWB exam for purposes of learning about the exam process and security. All individuals who are interested in doing so must contact ASWB to request authorization to test. Before authorization is provided, all individuals testing must sign a confidentiality agreement. These scores are not maintained or counted in psychometric statistics.
12. The Association has defined the intended purpose of each examination as follows, and every candidate shall meet the following requirements prior to testing:

*Associate.* This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue licenses to non-social work–degreed applicants.

*Bachelors.* This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals with a BSW, upon entry to practice, licenses for basic generalist practice of Baccalaureate Social Work. Member Boards may approve candidates for examination who are in their final semester of the BSW program.

*Masters.* This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals with an MSW, upon entry to practice, licenses for Master's Social Work practice. The practice of

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Master's Social Work includes the application of specialized knowledge and advanced practice skills. Member Boards may approve candidates for examination who are in their final semester of the MSW program.

*Advanced Generalist.* This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals who have an MSW and two years (or commensurate experience as defined by the jurisdiction) of experience in non-clinical settings, licenses for Advanced Generalist social work practice. Advanced Generalist social work occurs in non-clinical settings that may include macro-level practice. Member Boards may approve candidates for examination who are within six (6) months of completing supervised experience requirement.

*Clinical.* This examination has been developed for use as a licensure requirement by Member Boards that issue to individuals who have an MSW and two years (or commensurate experience as defined by the jurisdiction) of experience in clinical settings, licenses for the practice of Clinical Social Work. The practice of Clinical Social Work requires the application of specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills. Member Boards may approve candidates for examination who are within six (6) months of completing supervised experience requirement.

To ensure the legal defensibility of examination results, the Association reserves the right to limit access to and use of any ASWB examination only for those purpose(s) for which it is intended. The Association's support of the legal defensibility of its examinations is limited to use consistent with these policies and with the current practice analysis. Any member desiring to use the exam outside of this policy must apply for a waiver using a procedure approved by the ASWB Board of Directors.

13. The Association shall only register examination candidates who have applied to a Member Board for social work licensure, submitted themselves to the legal jurisdiction of the Member Board, and have been approved to take a specific category of examination by such Member Board. Member Boards shall enter/submit approvals to test through a secure board portal provided by ASWB. Member Boards shall provide instructions to approved candidates to visit the ASWB website for exam information.

**Adopted 1980. Revised 1983, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994; confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors 1997, 1998, April 2001, November 2002, October 2004, August 2005, October 2005, November 2007, August 2008, October 2009, August 2010, May 2011, August 2011, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017, April 2019, January 2020, April 2021, April 2022.**

## **2.2 EXAMINATION COMMITTEE**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Association places great importance on development and administration of valid licensing examinations.

### **POLICY:**

1. There shall be as many members of the Examination Committee as are needed to accomplish the work.
2. Members of the Examination Committee shall be appointed by the President to serve for a one-year period, renewable each year for two additional years. The President shall consult with ASWB Examination Development staff and the Examination Committee liaison on appointments and renewals. Membership will be designed to ensure stability. The President designates the chairs, as confirmed by the Board of Directors.
3. Appointees to the Examination Committee must be from jurisdictions with legal regulation of social work. Efforts will be made to achieve diversity in gender, race, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds when making appointments to the committee. This will help to ensure a broad range of thought and ideas from which to draw expertise, and to eliminate as far as possible ethnic, cultural, or gender bias.
4. Appointees to the Examination Committee should have taken at least one social work licensing examination, be licensed in their jurisdiction, and be either a current practitioner or an active member of the faculty of a school of social work. Appointees must also have been trained as item writers. Whenever possible with the pool of appointees available, at least one member who is practicing and one member who is teaching at each examination designation shall be included in the composition of the committee. Efforts will be made to include a wide range of social work practice skills.
5. Before beginning service on the Examination Committee, a new member must sign a confidentiality agreement developed by the Association. This agreement shall include, but not be limited to, restrictions from teaching an examination preparatory course, providing individualized instruction in relation to taking the examination, or taking any category of the examination for which work has been performed for periods of time established in the agreement by the Association.
6. Members of the Examination Committee are prohibited perpetually from revealing specific item content.

**Adopted 1983. Revised 1984; confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors 1998, April 2001, April 2009, August 2009, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017.**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.3**

## **2.3 AD-HOC EXAMINATION VOLUNTEERS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The range of activities necessary to support the ASWB examination development program will at times require the use of additional volunteers to assist with various processes as needed. These ad-hoc volunteers must function within limited roles and meet established requirements for participation.

### **POLICY:**

1. All ad-hoc volunteers must be emeritus members of the ASWB Examination Committee who have completed at least one three-year term of service on the Examination Committee.
2. All ad-hoc volunteers must be from jurisdictions with legal regulation of social work, must have taken at least one social work licensing exam, be licensed and in good standing in their jurisdictions, and be either a current practitioner or an active member of the faculty of a school of social work.
3. Before beginning service as an ad-hoc volunteers a new volunteer must sign a confidentiality agreement developed by the Association. This agreement shall include, but not be limited to, restrictions from teaching an examination preparatory course, providing individualized instruction in relation to taking the examination, or taking a category of the examination for which work has been performed for periods of time established in the agreement by the Association.
4. Ad-hoc volunteers are prohibited perpetually from revealing specific item content.
5. Ad-hoc volunteers primarily will be engaged in the review of examination forms for future release. Additionally, these volunteers may be called to serve as substitute members of the ASWB Examination Committee as needed.

**Approved by the Board of Directors January 25, 2020.**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.4**

## **2.4 ITEM GENERATION**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

It is essential that the Association have a reliable supply of high-quality items to submit to the Examination Committee for review and to be pretested for the item banks. Paid item writers write items and submit them electronically by protected means as designated by the Association with consultants and staff providing additional editing. Items may occasionally come from other sources, but they will be held to the same rigorous review procedures.

### **POLICY:**

1. New writers will be trained annually as needed.
2. All writers must:
  - Have a degree in social work
  - Hold a valid social work license or registration in good standing
  - Be currently practicing or teaching social work classes
3. Each writer must attend an item writer training workshop and will then work by submitting items electronically or by other secure means.
4. Each writer must enter into a contract with the Association to produce a specific number of original items per contract. Writers may be paid up to \$1,500 per contract, and contracts are renewable depending on the item writer's success. Items will be due on a periodic basis.
5. Items may be reviewed by item development consultants and staff for editing as needed before and after going to the Examination Committee for review.
6. Confidentiality agreements as developed by the Association must be signed by all item writers.

**Adopted 1984. Confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors 1998, April 2001, August 2009, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017, January 2018.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.4**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.5**



## **2.5 PRETESTING OF ITEMS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Items shall be pretested and analyzed to be sure they are appropriate for use in the examination.

### **POLICY:**

1. The Association shall pretest exam items at a psychometrically acceptable rate.
2. Pretest items are to be mixed in with the regular exam questions.
3. For paper and pencil testing, pretest items also are to be mixed in with regular questions.
4. Information about pretesting shall be published in the Candidate Handbook and on the Association website.

**Adopted August 9, 1991. Confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors 1998; confirmed April 2001; revised August 2009, August 2012.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.5**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.6**

## **2.6 EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION BY PAPER AND PENCIL**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Association will make provisions for administering the examinations by paper and pencil on a case-by-case basis.

### **POLICY:**

1. All standard ASWB examinations will be provided in an electronic testing format at centers acceptable to the Association in regard to location, staffing, and security.
2. Paper and pencil examinations will be provided as arrangements if they are requested by candidates with disabilities with the appropriate documentation and approvals.
3. Paper and pencil testing may also be provided to groups of candidates in geographically remote areas where travel to an existing testing site requires undue hardship or expense. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but no test administration will be considered if a computerized testing site is accessible by driving times of less than five hours.
4. For a paper and pencil administration because of geographically remote location, at least 10 candidates must register to take a form of the examinations on the same date. The Association, Member Boards, and the test contractor will work together to determine a date and registration procedures for the test administration. Proctoring will be provided by the test contractor, and all security procedures will be observed. All materials must be returned to the test contractor by secure carrier.
5. In any paper and pencil testing, all materials must be returned to the test contractor by secure carrier. Results will be provided to the candidate and to the Member Board in a timely manner.

**Adopted August 2002 by the Board of Directors; amended April 2005. Revised August 2011, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017, January 2020, April 2022.**

**2022 Note: Former policy number 2.2**

## **2.7 NONSTANDARD TESTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, HEALTH CONDITIONS, OR OTHER NEEDS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Association is committed to ensuring access to its examination program for all eligible candidates, while assuring the validity and security of the examinations. The Association will make necessary provisions for individuals with disabilities, health conditions, or other needs. Nonstandard testing arrangements cannot breach security or alter the validity of the examination to test minimum competencies.

### **POLICY:**

1. The Association will make all necessary determinations of reasonable and appropriate arrangements including those provided under applicable law related to individuals with disabilities in the United States and human rights legislation in Canada. Candidates must submit the appropriate request form for consideration. All arrangements require approval of the Association and must not fundamentally alter the exam or jeopardize security. The Association will make every reasonable effort to accommodate test candidates who have disabilities, health conditions, or other needs as defined.
  - a. Disabilities include those that limit one or more of life's major activities (e.g., walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, or thinking) or a major bodily function such as neurological, endocrine, or digestive system.
    - i. The candidate must submit a Request for Nonstandard Testing Arrangements as written verification of the disabling condition signed by an approved professional service provider who has expertise in the area of the disability and who has evaluated the candidate and is familiar with the candidate's condition. The professional service provider must have no other relationship with the candidate, such as a family, direct supervision, or teacher-student connection. This written verification must include the following information:
      - Formal medical or mental health diagnosis made or confirmed within the previous three years for conditions that are diagnosed as chronic
      - Formal medical or mental health diagnosis made or confirmed within the previous year for conditions that are diagnosed as temporary
      - Date of onset
      - Major Life Activities limited by the disabling condition
      - Circumstances under which accommodations were previously granted and dates of these occurrences
      - Requested accommodations in the testing situation
      - If the accommodations requested were not provided before, the reason that the accommodations are being requested now

If the disability is related to a learning disorder, the candidate must also submit written verification of the accommodations provided through student disability services at the educational institutions attended, if applicable. Candidates with learning disorders must also provide a psychological, psychoeducational, or

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neuropsychological evaluation that diagnosed or confirmed the diagnosis of a learning disorder.

In no circumstances shall a diagnosis of unspecified anxiety disorder in and of itself (as listed in the current edition of the DSM or ICD) related to examination administrations be accepted as a valid reason for testing accommodations.

- b. Health conditions or other needs include those that do not qualify as a disability but limit the candidate's ability to take the exam under standard conditions. These include injury or temporary condition, pregnancy, and lactation.
  - i. Supporting documentation may be required for health conditions or other needs.
2. Through its test contractor, the Association will assure that arrangements such as extra time; special proctoring; separate rooms; readers or writers; JAWS; or large-print versions of the examinations will be provided at no cost to Member Boards or candidates.
3. The Association reserves the right to reject the administration of an examination in a manner that, in the sole opinion of the Association, would jeopardize the integrity, validity, and/or security of the examination or fundamentally alter the exam itself. In the event that an arrangement is deemed by the Association to be inappropriate or not reasonable because of security or validity issues, and should the matter be contested by the candidate, the Association shall provide professional advice and legal consultation in support of the decision.
4. In consultation with the Member Board and the test contractor, other requests for arrangements that may arise under unique circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**Confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors 1998, April 2001, November 2001, October 2004, April 2012, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017, January 2020, April 2021, April 2022.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.6**

## **2.8 CANDIDATES WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Association is committed to ensuring that accommodations provided for candidates with vision impairments, including readers, give all eligible candidates access to its examination program, while assuring the validity and security of the examinations.

### **POLICY:**

- I. Candidates with visual impairments may choose from among the following accommodations available for the social work licensure examination administration:
  - A. Paper and pencil test booklet, either standard print (12 pt.) or enlarged print (18 or 24 pt.) font (CCTV or other enlargement technology approved to meet examination security requirements available for additional enlargement)
  - B. Braille version of the examination
  - C. Extra time, up to a total of eight hours (double the time allowed for the regular examination administration)
  - D. A private room
  - E. A qualified reader, audio recording, or currently approved and available technology provided by the Association or its testing contractor
  - F. A flexible starting time for the examination, if necessary, to allow for a pre-examination meeting between the candidate and the reader
- II. For candidates with vision impairments who choose readers, the following policies apply.
  - A. Readers must have the following qualifications:
    1. Hold at least a high-school diploma and be at least 18 years old
    2. Be able to read aloud test materials accurately and intelligibly for up to eight hours
    3. Have studied the written instructions that will be provided to readers (“ASWB Information for Readers and Signers”), and familiarized themselves with the terminology in the sample test questions before reading for the examination
    4. Be willing to meet with the candidate before the examination
  - B. To ensure a good working relationship between the candidate and the reader, the Association shall adhere to the following procedures:
    1. Upon request from the candidate, a pre-examination telephone conference and/or face-to-face meeting to allow for practice reading will be arranged.
    2. Specific written instructions for readers, including instructions regarding appropriate interaction with candidates and how to read the examination, will be provided.
    3. If after communication with the reader proposed by the Association or its testing contractor the candidate concludes that the reader will not be able to

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effectively communicate with him/her during the course of the examination, the candidate must notify the Association and/or its testing contractor of the problems in order to reschedule his/her examination with another reader.

4. Upon request from the candidate and when available, the Association may provide the candidate with a description of the assigned reader's previous reading experience.
  5. A meeting will be held with the candidate, the reader, and Test Center personnel prior to the examination to clarify the procedures, including the time parameters of the test administration. The Test Center personnel will clarify that the candidate is permitted to ask the reader to write notes, especially if the candidate has no tools or equipment for taking notes or is unable to do so.
- C. The following methods shall be used for monitoring and evaluating the experience:
1. A proctor shall monitor activities during the examination administration.
  2. The reader shall have an opportunity to evaluate the reading experience.
  3. To ensure the security of the ASWB examination, the reader must agree to follow procedures for secure test administration approved by the Association.

**Accepted by the Board of Directors 2000; confirmed April 2001; revised August 2011, August 2012, January 2016, January 2017, January 2020.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.7**

## **2.9 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Association is committed to ensuring access to its examination program for all eligible candidates while assuring the validity and security of the examinations. The Association will assist its Member Boards in making arrangements for candidates who use English as a second language.

### **POLICY:**

1. Where Member Boards permit, the Association will make arrangements for candidates who are English language learners. Such arrangements shall be granted solely at the discretion of Member Boards, in accordance with the laws and statutes of their individual jurisdictions.
2. Candidates must submit the appropriate request form for consideration. All arrangements require approval of the Association.
3. If permitted by the Member Board, such candidate may choose to use up to two (2) dictionaries, one bilingual word to word dictionary and/or one standard English dictionary, and/or be granted up to two (2) extra hours of time to complete the examination.
4. Standard English and English/Spanish word to word dictionaries are available at each of the test centers for use by approved candidates only. Where other bilingual word to word dictionaries are approved, the sealed dictionary shall be sent from the Association to the candidate by a secure carrier before the exam. The exam administrator shall inspect the dictionary before and after the exam. After the examination, the exam administrator shall return the bilingual word to word dictionary by a secure carrier in a self-addressed package provided by the Association. The costs of the dictionary are to be borne by the candidate, or if the regulatory board chooses, by the board. It is customary for the Association to waive the payment.

**Approved January 29, 1995; confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995. Revised by the Board of Directors March 1996, September 1998, April 2001, October 2003, February 2006, November 2008, May 2011, August 2012, January 2016, January 2020, April 2022.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.8**

## 2.10 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR THE USE OF ASSISTIVE PERSONNEL IN ASWB EXAMINATIONS

### INTRODUCTION:

ASWB is committed to ensuring access to its examination program for all eligible candidates. Under applicable laws, ASWB provides nonstandard testing arrangements that vary in scope depending on the substantiated disability and other relevant factors. At times, through its examination vendor, ASWB may arrange for the presence of assistive personnel within the test center and within the examination room.

### POLICY:

1. Terms and roles of assistive personnel defined.
  - A. Assistive personnel are divided into three categories:
    1. Registration Assistive Personnel
    2. Content Assistive Personnel
    3. Personal Care Attendants
  - B. Registration Assistive Personnel and Content Assistive Personnel are individuals selected and employed by or under contract with the examination owner or the test administration vendor and who have agreed to abide by the standards and criteria contained herein.
    1. Without limitation, such Registration Assistive Personnel and Content Assistive Personnel may include readers, scribes, proctors, sign language interpreters, and personnel needed to operate specific computers or devices necessary to the delivery and scoring of the examination as approved by the examination owner.
    2. *Registration Assistive Personnel and Content Assistive Personnel are limited to only those persons arranged for or approved by ASWB or its examination vendor.*
  - C. Personal Care Attendants are individuals selected and employed by the test-taker whose activities are limited to assisting with a test-taker's mobility into and out of the test center and providing other personal care unrelated to the delivery and content of the examination.
    1. Personal Care Attendants are not allowed access to the examination carrel or to the examination room.
    2. *ASWB reserves the right to approve Personal Care Attendants if necessary to protect the integrity of the examination and the licensure process.*



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2. Use of Registration Assistive Personnel related to access to and completion of the examination.
  - A. Registration Assistive Personnel will be provided at the test center location when determined to be required under law and duly requested and arranged in advance.
  - B. Candidates will be allowed to engage with Registration Assistive Personnel in interactions that familiarize the candidate with the test center surroundings and examination administration, including:
    1. at check-in, including substantiation of identification of the candidate
    2. to review processes and procedures related to examination access, administration, and completion, obtaining the score report and completing exit surveys
    3. to review policies related to security, breaks, and allowed and disallowed materials within the test center
    4. when being oriented to the location of exit doors and restrooms
    5. when asking other general questions
  - C. Candidate interactions with Registration Assistive Personnel will be conducted in a manner that is not disruptive to the environment and others who are seeking access to and/or are taking their examinations.
  - D. *Registration Assistive Personnel are authorized to provide only information that ensures the candidate understands examination administration, inclusive of post-examination information and security concerns.*
3. Use of Content Assistive Personnel related to the delivery of examination content and recordation of responses.
  - A. Content Assistive Personnel will be provided at the test center location when determined to be required by law and duly requested and arranged in advance.
  - B. Candidates will be allowed to engage with the Content Assistive Personnel for purposes related to the delivery of examination content and recordation of responses. *No additional interaction between the candidate and Content Assistive Personnel is permitted.*
  - C. Content Assistive Personnel will provide a verbatim reading of the examination item/question and each potential answer and corresponding letter (for recordation into the computer, as appropriate).
    1. If requested by the candidate, items/questions and answer choices may be repeated.
    2. Items/questions may be flagged, returned to, and reread as necessary.
  - D. Content Assistive Personnel *will not* provide interpretive or editorial comments related to examination items/questions, content, definitions, or answer

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choices. The intent is to engage in a verbatim communication of what is contained on the examination form.

- E. Content Assistive Personnel who provide examination content and response recordation in the form of American Sign Language (ASL) will adhere to verbatim interpretation of examination items and responses.
  - 1. Terms of art or other social work-specific words that cannot be interpreted into ASL will be communicated to the candidate through finger spelling.
- F. *The scope of the authority of Content Assistive Personnel is limited to a verbatim communication of examination content and recordation of responses.*

### **4. Confidentiality and nondisclosure statements.**

- A. All Registration Assistive Personnel and Content Assistive Personnel will be required to complete and agree to confidentiality and nondisclosure statements determined necessary by the examination owner and/or examination vendor.
- B. These statements may address not only the protection of examination-related administration and content, but also confidential information related to examination information protected by the vendor.

**Approved by the Board of Directors August 5, 2017. Revised April 2022.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.15**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.16**

## **2.11 CANCELLATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Cancellation policies are established in an effort to treat candidates for the examinations as fairly as possible while controlling administrative costs.

### **POLICY:**

1. Examination fees are nonrefundable.
2. Candidates may cancel an examination reservation within timeframes specified on the Association website and in materials provided to examination candidates and make a new reservation without paying additional fees.
3. The Association office will consider extenuating circumstances for certain cancellations not made within specified timelines. These excused absences include illness of the candidate or the candidate's immediate family member, death in the immediate family, disabling traffic accident, court appearance or jury duty, or military duty. Candidates must follow submission and documentation guidelines on the Association website and in materials provided to examination candidates to request an excused absence. Candidates excused by the Association will be required to pay a rescheduling fee that is valid for registering for the exam up to one year after receiving approval of the excused absence. Candidates who do not register to take the exam within approved time frames must pay the full exam fee.
4. Examination appointments canceled by the testing vendor or test center due to severe weather, disasters, technical problems, or other emergencies shall be rescheduled at no cost to the candidate.
5. Candidates shall not be reimbursed for any expenses incurred due to examination cancellation.

**Reaffirmed April 12, 1991; revised Feb. 15, 1992; confirmed by the Executive Committee April 1995.  
Revised by the Board of Directors September 1998, April 2001, August 2012, January 2016, April 2022.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.9**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.10**

## **2.12 EXAMINATION REVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Because the integrity of the examination program is of the utmost importance, the Association does not permit review of the examination by any candidate. When compelled to provide such review through jurisdictional law, the Association shall allow review only under strict limitations that guard against risks to examination security.

### **POLICY:**

1. If review of the examination is required under the law of the jurisdiction in which the candidate has applied for licensure, such review shall be subject to the following provisions:
  - a. Review is limited to unsuccessful candidates who have applied for licensure to the board in such jurisdiction.
  - b. Eligible candidates must specify content areas to be reviewed.
  - c. The Association must receive the request for review from eligible candidates no later than five days after the candidate's score report has been forwarded to the licensing jurisdiction from the Association.
  - d. Content areas subject to review may be limited by the Association, and candidate review may be limited to unsuccessfully answered items only.
  - e. Materials to be reviewed shall be transmitted via and maintained under secure means as determined by the Association including, but not limited to, possession of such materials at all times by ASWB personnel.
  - f. Review shall not occur less than 90 days before the first date on which the candidate is eligible to retest.
  - g. All expenses related to review shall be paid in advance by the requesting candidate.

**Adopted 1992. Reaffirmed 1994; confirmed 1995; amended 1997; confirmed 2001; amended 2003. Amended August 2004, August 2008, January 2016.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.10**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.11**

## **2.13 EXAMINATION SECURITY**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The examinations developed and maintained by ASWB are the Association's most important products, and crucial tools in the protection of the public. Because the Association, Member Boards, and consumers depend on valid, reliable social work licensure examinations, the Association must make every effort to ensure that the security of its examinations is not compromised.

### **POLICY:**

1. Association office staff shall maintain a single, comprehensive examination security manual that shall include procedures, guidelines, and other information regarding examination security. The manual will be kept updated as needed by a staff member assigned that duty.
2. Information on examination security procedures shall be included on the Association website and in materials provided to examination candidates.
3. A Security Measures and Response Plan shall be incorporated within the Comprehensive Examination Security Manual and shall also be kept updated.
4. Trainings shall be conducted for all staff on security procedures and confidentiality, in accordance with the security plan as contained in the overall manual.
5. Candidates taking the examination must agree before an exam is administered not to copy, memorize, or in any way share test material recalled from the experience.
6. Candidates must also sign a statement agreeing that all exam questions are the property of the Association and that the questions cannot be copied and/or conveyed or shared verbally, online, in written form, or in any other manner to anyone.
7. Such prohibitions on sharing information about exam questions shall be made available through the Association website and in other examination information.
8. Examination candidates suspected while at the testing center of having violated test security policies and procedures set in place by the Association will have a hold placed on their examination scores and the incident will be investigated by Association examination services management staff.
  - a. If the investigation determines that the alleged conduct does not constitute misconduct, the score hold will be removed and the examination scores will be released.
  - b. If the investigation determines that the alleged conduct does constitute misconduct, the candidate will be notified by letter sent via overnight delivery. The candidate shall have 30 days to provide a written response and may be required to complete a signed notarized affidavit to provide more detailed information or answer additional questions about the alleged conduct. The jurisdictional board may also be notified via letter that the candidate's score is on hold pending investigation of an irregularity report. The Association Board of Directors in

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consultation with legal counsel will review the materials from the investigation and decide the outcome. The candidate and jurisdictional board will be notified in writing of the Board of Director's decision. There is no appeal to the decision of the Board of Directors. All those responsible for the misconduct may be referred for prosecution and/or civil action by the Association and its testing vendor.

9. Examination candidates and/or licensees suspected of violating the signed candidate agreement after exam administration shall be subject to investigation by the Association. The candidate/licensee will be notified of the investigation by letter sent via overnight delivery. The candidate/licensee shall have 30 days to reply in writing and may be required to complete a signed notarized affidavit to provide more detailed information or answer additional questions about the suspected violation. The jurisdictional board may be notified via letter of the investigation. The investigation materials will be presented to the Association Board of Directors for review. The Board of Directors in consultation with legal counsel will determine the outcome. The candidate/licensee and jurisdictional board will be notified by letter sent via overnight delivery. There will be no appeal to the decision of the Board of Directors. Those responsible for the violation may also be referred for prosecution and/or civil action by the Association.
10. Any individual or entity suspected of exposing examination items via the Internet or any other method shall be investigated. The course of action will be determined by the Association Board of Directors in consultation with legal counsel. Those responsible could face a range of administrative, civil, and criminal charges if the Board of Directors determines that exposure of items occurred.
11. The Association will work with its Member Boards to develop licensure candidate application procedures that allow for initial screening of candidates before they register for the examinations. The Association may do this by offering candidate preapproval services to its Member Boards, or through other forms of assistance.
12. To ensure the confidentiality of proprietary information, all supplier contracts shall include language that gives ASWB the right to request and/or conduct an independent security audit of the supplier if deemed necessary.
13. Employees of the test contractor and testing centers that administer ASWB examinations shall not take an ASWB examination for a year after they have concluded their employment with the center.
14. If a member of the immediate family of an employee of a testing center that administers the ASWB examinations is going to take the ASWB examination, alternate testing arrangements must be made to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

**Approved by the Board of Directors April 1999. Revised April 2001, February 2003, October 2004, August 2009, August 2012, November 2012, May 2014, August 2014, January 2016, April 2016, January 2019, April 2022.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.11**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.12**

## **2.14 SCORE TRANSFER**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

ASWB provides a uniform, standardized examination program to its Member Boards. This program is legally defensible based on the examination development process, which includes a practice analysis that at a minimum examines social work in all member jurisdictions, item development, pretesting, and ongoing psychometric analyses. The nature of the ASWB practice analysis and examination program reflects social work practice in the United States and Canada, based on accepted sampling standards.

Jurisdictions that use a jurisdiction-specific minimum competency examination as part of the criteria for determining licensure eligibility have concluded by direct implication that the ASWB practice analysis does not reflect social work practice in that jurisdiction.

### **POLICY:**

1. The validity of the ASWB examination program and its legal defensibility are sustainable in all jurisdictions included in the most recent practice analysis.
2. The Association supports the score transfer of ASWB examination results to Member Boards. Member Boards shall rely only on the Official Score Transfer provided directly from ASWB for this purpose. Score reports submitted directly by candidates are not official and are not acceptable for licensure purposes.
3. Examination scores from jurisdictions using jurisdiction-specific examinations for the purposes of determining licensure eligibility shall not be recognized by the Association as a competency assessment mechanism equivalent to any of the ASWB examinations.
4. The Association cannot legally support the defensibility of examinations other than those administered by ASWB.

**Adopted by the Board of Directors October 1999. Revised April 2001, October 2004, August 2009, August 2012, January 2016, April 2021.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.12**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.13**

## **2.15 SHARING OF EXAMINATION DATA**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Through its examination program, the Association collects information from exam candidates and compiles certain aggregate exam performance data related to a number of variables. Some information supplied by exam candidates is either optional or not verified for accuracy by ASWB due to accessibility constraints, privacy laws, and the inability to satisfactorily or reasonably provide substantiation. Based on these variables and the potential for misuse and misinterpretation of these exam performance data, ASWB reserves the right to disseminate aggregate exam performance data only under circumstances that provide the Association with a reasonable assurance that such data are statistically significant and are accurate. As a basis for or against disclosure, ASWB will consider factors including, but not limited to, first-time test-takers and numeric volumes that support statistical standards.

### **POLICY:**

1. Upon request by a Member Board, ASWB may disseminate to the Member Board a compilation or aggregate pass-fail statistics report related to test-takers of that jurisdiction based on an annual calculation, subject to candidate volume restrictions that are statistically supported. These Member Board reports shall be developed based on reports supplied by the exam vendor. Such aggregate exam performance data reports shall be accompanied by the appropriate disclaimers regarding statistically significant numbers and limitations on use.
2. At the discretion of the ASWB Board of Directors and upon request by a Member Board, ASWB may disseminate to that requesting Member Board a compilation or aggregate pass-fail statistics report related to educational programs within that jurisdiction for test-takers based on an annual calculation, subject to candidate volume restrictions that are statistically supported. Such Member Board education reports shall be developed based on reports supplied by the exam vendor. Such reports shall be accompanied by the appropriate disclaimers regarding statistically significant numbers and limitations on use.
3. At the discretion of the ASWB Board of Directors and upon request by an accredited social work education program, ASWB may disseminate to that program a compilation or aggregate pass-fail statistics report related to that requesting program for test-takers based on an annual calculation, subject to candidate volume restrictions that are statistically supported. Such education program reports shall be developed based on reports supplied by the exam vendor. Such reports shall be accompanied by the appropriate disclaimers regarding statistically significant numbers and limitations on use.
4. Under any circumstances above, ASWB reserves the right to limit the dissemination of aggregate exam data based on factors related to legal issues, confidentiality, statistically insignificant data, or other reasons necessary to protect the integrity of the examination program or ASWB.

**Approved by the Board of Directors June 8, 2006. Revised August 2011, August 2012, August 2017.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.13**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.14**



## **2.16 EXAMINATION PROGRAM MONITORING**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

To serve its membership and to fulfill its legal obligation and public protection mission, the Association must ensure that its examination program maintains high standards of validity and reliability. The Association continuously monitors the program and shall, from time to time, obtain program evaluations from sources not affiliated with the Association or its testing vendor.

### **POLICY:**

1. To assess the examination experience, a survey shall be administered to all candidates at the end of the examination.
2. Responses to the survey shall be compiled and examined to identify any part of the test administration that candidates have indicated does not meet their needs and expectations.
3. The Association shall maintain close communication with Member Boards and Member Board staff to determine any concerns with test centers or administration procedures.
4. The exam contractor must provide quarterly reports on candidate performance.
5. The exam contractor must supply an annual technical report.
6. The exam contractor must provide item bank reports before every meeting of the ASWB Examination Committee.
7. The Association exam program will be continually evaluated by a third-party psychometric vendor and against testing industry standards.
8. A psychometrician shall be present at every ASWB Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly to report on the examinations and to respond to questions or concerns from Member Boards.
9. Every six to eight years, an independent security audit of the exam program shall be conducted.
10. Staff and leadership shall attend professional meetings on testing as required to keep in-house knowledge up to date.
11. The effectiveness of the item development program, including item writer training, item editing, item development consulting, and organization of the ASWB Examination Committee meetings shall be monitored regularly by staff and reported to the Board of Directors.

**Approved by the Board of Directors November 10, 2006. Revised August 2009, August 2012, January 2016, January 2019, April 2021.**

**2020 Note: former policy number 2.14**

**2022 Note: former policy number 2.15**