



Content Outlines and KSAs

Social Work Licensing Examinations

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.

Masters Examination

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 28%

I.A. THEORIES AND MODELS

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

- Developmental theories
- Systems theories
- Family theories
- Group theories
- Psychodynamic theories
- Behavioral, cognitive, and learning theories
- Community development theories
- Person in environment
- Addiction theories and concepts
- Communication theories
- Defense mechanisms
- Normal and abnormal behavior
- Indicators of normal physical growth and development
- Adult development
- Effects of life crises
- Impact of stress, trauma, and violence
- Emotional development
- Sexual development
- Aging processes
- Family life cycle
- Family dynamics and functioning
- Cognitive development
- Social development
- Child development
- Basic human needs
- Adolescent development
- Human genetics
- Gender roles
- Impact of environment on individuals
- Impact of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities on human development
- Interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors
- Effects of family dynamics on individuals
- Dynamics of grief and loss
- Impact of economic changes on client systems
- Effects of body image on self and relationships
- Cultural, racial, and ethnic identity development
- Strengths perspective

I.B. ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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

- Abuse and neglect concepts
- Indicators and dynamics of sexual abuse
- Indicators and dynamics of psychological abuse and neglect
- Indicators and dynamics of physical abuse and neglect

I.B. ABUSE AND NEGLECT (continued)

- Characteristics of abuse perpetrators
- Indicators and dynamics of exploitation

I.C. DIVERSITY, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC JUSTICE, AND OPPRESSION

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

- Influence of culture, race, and/or ethnicity on behaviors and attitudes
- Influence of sexual orientation and/or gender identity on behavior and attitudes
- Influence of disability on behaviors and attitudes
- Effects of differences in values
- Impact of cultural heritage on self-image
- Impact of spirituality and/or religious beliefs on behaviors and attitudes
- Effects of discrimination
- Systemic (institutionalized) discrimination
- Professional commitment to promoting justice
- Impact of social institutions on society
- Impact of diversity in styles of communicating
- Influence of age on behaviors and attitudes

II. ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PLANNING

24%

II.A. BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AND COLLATERAL DATA

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

- Psychopharmacology
- Components of a biopsychosocial history
- Components of a sexual history
- Common prescription medications
- Components of a family history
- Basic medical terminology
- Symptoms of mental and emotional illness
- Symptoms of neurologic and organic processes
- Indicators of sexual dysfunction
- Indicators of psychosocial stress
- Indicators of traumatic stress and violence
- Indicators of substance abuse and other addictions

II.B. USE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

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

- Use of collateral sources to obtain relevant information
- Methods used to evaluate collateral information
- Process used in problem identification
- Methods used to assess the client's communication skills
- Use of observation
- Methods of involving clients in identifying problems
- Indicators of client's strengths and challenges
- Use of assessment/diagnostic instruments in practice
- Methods used to organize information
- Current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual diagnostic framework and criteria
- Components and function of the mental status examination
- Process of social work assessment/diagnosis
- Methods used in assessing ego strengths

II.B.USE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES (continued)

- Methods used to assess community strengths and challenges
- Methods used in risk assessment
- Indicators of client danger to self and others
- Indicators of motivation and resistance
- Methods used to identify service needs of clients
- Use of interviewing techniques
- Process of assessing the client's needed level of care

II.C.INTERVENTION PLANNING

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

- Factors used in determining the client's readiness/ability to participate in services
- Criteria used in selecting intervention modalities
- Components of an intervention or service plan
- Human development considerations in the creation of an intervention plan
- Methods used to develop an intervention plan
- Techniques used to establish measurable intervention or service plans
- Methods used to involve clients in intervention planning
- Methods for planning interventions with groups
- Methods for planning interventions with organizations and communities
- Cultural considerations in the creation of an intervention plan

III. DIRECT AND INDIRECT PRACTICE

21%

III.A.DIRECT/MICRO

- This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:
- Client advocacy
- Empowerment process
- Methods used in working with involuntary clients
- Psychosocial approach
- Components of the problem-solving process
- Crisis intervention approach
- Task centered practice
- Short-term interventions
- Methods used to provide educational services to clients
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Use of case management
- Techniques used to evaluate a client's progress
- Use of contracting and goal-setting with client systems
- Use of timing in intervention
- Phases of intervention
- Indicators of client readiness for termination
- Techniques used for follow-up in social work practice
- Use of active listening skills
- Techniques used to motivate clients
- Techniques used to teach skills to clients
- Use and effects of out-of-home placement
- Methods used to develop behavioral objectives
- Client self-monitoring techniques
- Technique of role play

III.A.DIRECT/MICRO (continued)

- Assertiveness training
- Role modeling techniques
- Limit setting
- Methods used to develop learning objectives with clients
- Models of intervention with families
- Couples intervention/treatment approaches
- Interventions with groups
- Techniques for working with individuals within the group context
- Use of expertise from other disciplines
- Approaches used in consultation
- Processes of interdisciplinary collaboration
- Methods used to coordinate services among service providers
- Multidisciplinary team approach
- Case recording and record-keeping
- Methods used to facilitate communication
- Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- Techniques that explore underlying meanings of communication
- Methods used to obtain/provide feedback
- Methods used to interpret and communicate policies and procedures
- Methods used to clarify the benefits and limitations of resources with clients
- Use of case recording for practice evaluation or supervision
- Use of single-subject designs in practice
- Evaluation of practice
- Interpreting and applying research findings to practice
- Process used to refer clients for services
- Use of cognitive behavioral techniques
- Culturally competent social work practice

III.B.INDIRECT/MACRO

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

- Applying concepts of organizational theories
- Impact of social welfare legislation on social work practice
- Methods used to establish service networks or community resources
- Techniques for mobilizing community participation
- Techniques of social planning methods
- Techniques of social policy analysis
- Techniques to influence social policy
- Techniques of working with large groups
- Use of networking
- Approaches to culturally competent practice with organizations and communities
- Advocacy with communities and organizations
- Impact of agency policy and function on service delivery

IV. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, VALUES, AND ETHICS

27%

IV.A. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICAL ISSUES

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

- Professional values and ethics
- Client self-determination
- Intrinsic worth and value of the individual
- Client's right to refuse service
- Ethical issues regarding termination
- Bioethical issues
- Identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas
- Applying ethics to practice issues
- Responsibility to seek supervision
- Use of professional development to improve practice
- Professional boundaries

IV.B. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

- Legal and ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic communication
- Use of client records
- Ethical and legal issues regarding mandatory reporting
- Obtaining informed consent

IV.C. SOCIAL WORKER ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- Social worker-client relationship patterns
- Concept of empathy
- Process of engagement in social work practice
- Concept of a helping relationship
- Principles of relationship building
- Professional objectivity in the social worker-client relationship
- Concepts of transference and countertransference
- Use of the social worker-client relationship as an intervention tool
- Social worker-client relationships in work with communities and organizations
- Social worker-client relationships in work with small groups
- Methods used to clarify roles of the social worker
- Social worker's roles in the problem-solving process
- Client's roles in the problem-solving process
- Influence of the social worker's values on the social worker-client relationship
- Dual relationships
- Influence of cultural diversity on the social worker-client relationship