



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.

ASWB Examination program Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Advanced Generalist Examination

I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY & BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 18%

I.A. MODELS OF HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

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

- Theories of human growth and development through the lifespan
- The psychosocial model
- Ego psychology
- Feminist theory
- Psychodynamic theory
- Personality theory
- Family systems theory
- Psychoanalytic theory
- Systems theory
- Addiction theories
- Conflict theory
- The indicators of normal physical growth and development through the lifespan
- The impact of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities on human development through the lifespan
- The normal life crises
- Emotional development
- Normal sexual development
- Gerontology
- The concept of attachment and bonding
- Basic human needs
- The adult learning process
- Human genetics

I.B. MODELS OF FUNCTIONING OF VARIOUS SYSTEMS

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

- The effects of family dynamics on individuals
- Family life cycle
- Abnormal and normal functioning in traditional and nontraditional families
- Models of organizational development
- Models of group development
- Models of community development
- Models of couples development

I.C. EFFECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON SYSTEMS' BEHAVIOR

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

- Normal and abnormal behavior
- The socialization process
- The interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors
- Social development
- The impact of environment on individuals

- The indicators of psychosocial stress
- The impact of economic status
- The effects of social role on self-image
- The impact of poverty on individuals, families, organizations and communities
- The effects of social role on relationships
- The effects of addictive behavior on relationships
- The effects of defense mechanisms on relationships
- The dynamics of work relationships
- The dynamics of domestic and other violence in relationships
- Theories of crisis intervention

I.D. DIVERSITY, DISCRIMINATION, AND STEREOTYPES

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

- The influence of culture, race, religion/spirituality, and/or ethnicity on behaviors and attitudes
- The influence of sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identification on behaviors and attitudes
- The influence of age and/or disability on behaviors and attitudes
- The effects of discrimination based on culture, race, religion/spirituality and/or ethnicity
- The effects of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identification
- The effects of discrimination based on age and/or disability
- The relationship between self-image and cultural heritage
- The different and similar characteristics of cultural, racial, religious, and/or ethnic groups
- The different and similar characteristics related to sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identification
- The different and similar characteristics of age groups and types of disability
- Stereotypes
- The impact of diversity in styles of communicating

II. MICRO ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

22%

II.A. USE OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS

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

- Psychological and educational tests and measurement
- The use of assessment/diagnosis instruments in practice
- The components and function of the mental status examination
- The process used in problem formulation
- The methods of involving the client and/or systems in identifying the problem
- The principles and techniques of interviewing
- The methods used to assess the client's communication skills
- The methods used to assess motivation and resistance
- The methods used to assess needed level of care

II.B. USE OF SOCIAL HISTORY

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

- The components of a biopsychosocial history
- The types of information available from employment, medical, psychological, and school records
- The methods used to collect and evaluate collateral information

- The methods used to obtain information relevant to a given situation
- The components of a sexual history
- The components of a marital history
- The components of a family history
- Basic medical terminology
- The exploration of spiritual/religious beliefs and practices

II.C.IMPACT OF LIFE STRESSORS ON SYSTEMS

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

- The effects of life stressors on families
- The effects of stressors on behavior
- The impact of physical and mental illness on family dynamics
- The dynamics of loss, separation, and grief
- The impact of aging parents on adult children
- The factors of child development
- The psychological responses to illness and disability
- The effects of addictions on individuals, families, organizations, and communities
- The impact of economic changes on individuals, families, organizations and communities
- The effects of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse on individuals, families, organizations and communities
- The impact of life cycle changes on systems
- The effects of life crises on individuals
- The effects of life crises on the family
- The impact on clients of out-of-home displacement (e.g. hospitalization, jail, foster care, natural disaster, etc.)
- The impact of defense mechanisms on behavior

II.D.INTERVENTION PLANNING

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

- Criteria used in selecting intervention/treatment modalities
- The components of and methods used to develop an intervention/treatment or service plan
- The effect of the client's developmental level on the creation of an intervention/treatment plan
- Permanency planning
- Methods used to develop measurable objectives to assess client change
- The client's role in the intervention process
- The methods used to develop behavioral objectives
- The methods used to formulate a timeframe for interventions
- The methods used to identify learning needs for clients

II.E.ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

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

- The methods used to assess clients' strengths and challenges
- The factors used in determining the client's ability to use intervention/treatment
- The methods used in assessing ego strengths
- The indicators of motivation and resistance

II.F.IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON INDICATORS OF RISKS AND DISORDERS

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

- The effects of body image on self-image
- The indicators of somatization
- The indicators of malingering
- Use of the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association
- Psychopathology
- The symptoms of mental and emotional illness
- The symptoms of neurologic and organic processes
- The symptoms of substance abuse and other addictions
- The indicators of sexual dysfunction
- The dynamics and indicators of neglect and physical, psychological, and sexual abuse
- The characteristics of perpetrators of abuse and neglect
- The indicators of client danger to self and others
- The methods used to assess the client's communication skills
- The use of observation to assess client interactions
- The ways in which the client's behavior with a social worker is representative of his/her relationship patterns
- Common psychotropic and non-psychotropic prescriptions and over the counter medications and their side effects

III. MICRO PRACTICE AND SOCIAL WORK RELATIONSHIPS

18%

III.A.APPLICATION OF THEORIES, METHODS, AND PROCESSES TO MICRO SYSTEMS

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

- The problem-solving model
- The crisis intervention/treatment approach
- Task centered practice
- Behavioral approaches
- The selection of theoretical approaches to meet client need
- Psychotherapies
- Short-term interventions/treatments
- Client advocacy
- The methods used in working with the unmotivated or involuntary client
- Case management
- The use of permanency planning as an intervention/treatment method
- The phases of intervention/treatment
- The indicators of client readiness for termination
- The methods of conflict resolution
- Small group theories
- Other intervention/treatment strategies

III.B.MICRO INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

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

- The use of partializing, supporting, focusing, clarifying, confronting, interpreting, and reflecting
- The techniques used to motivate clients
- The techniques used to develop contracts with clients
- The techniques used to clarify the responsibilities of the client
- The use of goal-setting

- The techniques used to teach skills to clients
- The differential use of intervention/treatment techniques
- Client self-monitoring techniques
- The use of timing in intervention/treatment
- The technique of role play
- Role-modeling techniques
- The techniques used for follow-up
- Stress management techniques
- Limit setting
- The process used to refer clients for services
- The approaches to family therapy
- Use of clients' strengths
- Couples intervention/treatment approaches
- Group dynamics
- The approaches to social group work
- The approaches to group psychotherapy
- The differential use of group process
- The techniques for developing and maintaining group cohesion
- The process of co-therapy
- The concept of congruence in communication
- The methods used in summarizing communication
- Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- Techniques that elicit the underlying meaning of communication
- The methods used to obtain and provide feedback

III.C.DYNAMICS OF THE SOCIAL WORKER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

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

- The process of engagement in social work practice
- The social worker's role in the change process
- The concept of empathy
- The concept of a helping relationship
- The use of acceptance
- The methods used to clarify the role of the social worker
- The principles of relationship building
- Professional objectivity in the social worker/client relationship
- The concept of transference and countertransference
- The components of the social worker/client relationship
- The use of the social worker/client relationship as an intervention/treatment tool
- The effect of the client's developmental level on the social worker/client relationship
- The influence of the social worker's own values on the social worker/client relationship
- The dynamics of power and transparency in the helping relationship
- The dynamics of diversity in the helping relationship
- The dynamics of domestic and other violence in the helping relationship

III.D.APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

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

- The techniques used to evaluate a client's progress
- Techniques used to measure the effectiveness of the social work intervention
- Utilization of research results in practice

- Applying evidence-based practices to current programs

IV. MACRO PRACTICE

18%

IV.A. RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

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

- The methods of data collection
- The difference between quantitative and qualitative data
- Data analysis procedures
- The methods used to evaluate research instruments
- The methods used to assess reliability and validity in social work research
- Social work research designs
- Appropriate uses of statistical data
- Research ethics (e.g. institutional review boards, use of human subjects, informed consent)

IV.B. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

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

- The methods used to evaluate agency programs
- Assessment/diagnosis instruments used to evaluate social work practice
- The effects of program evaluation findings on services
- Accreditation and program reviews
- Determination of appropriate evaluation tools

IV.C. RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTING

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

- Written communication skills
- Case recording and record keeping
- The use of appropriate documentation and correspondence in service delivery
- The management of agency/practice records

IV.D. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

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

- The types of service delivery programs/systems
- The methods used to clarify the benefits and limitations of resources
- The methods used to interpret and communicate policies and procedures
- The development of programs and services to meet community needs
- The methods used to establish service networks or community resources
- The effects of agency policies, regulation, and function on service delivery
- The methods of conducting a needs assessment
- Establishing program objectives and outcomes

IV.E. INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

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

- Elements of a case presentation
- The range or expertise of professions other than social work
- The use of collaterals to obtain relevant information
- The approaches used in consultation
- The use of networking
- The process for interdisciplinary collaboration
- The methods used to coordinate services between service providers or agencies
- The multidisciplinary team approach

- The use of informal and formal power structures
- The use of advocacy among agencies and disciplines

IV.F.POLICY ANALYSIS AND ADVOCACY

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

- Interpreting legislation to clients
- The impact of social welfare legislation on social work practice
- Social policy processes and analysis
- Legislative advocacy
- The methods of advocacy for policy and/or procedural change
- The methods of advocacy for resources to meet client needs
- The methods of advocacy for policies and services sensitive to ethnic and cultural differences
- The methods of advocacy for policies to eliminate discriminatory practices
- The policy implications of research findings

IV.G.THEORIES AND METHODS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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

- Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies
- The concept of citizen participation
- Community organization and development methods
- Community resources
- Community outreach and advocacy
- Social planning methods
- The impact of social institutions on society
- The theories of social change

IV.H.ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

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

- The impact of agency policy and procedures on social work practice
- Leadership and management techniques
- Time management approaches
- Formal and informal organizational structure
- The elements of caseload management
- The use of delegation as a technique
- The methods used to plan and assign work for staff
- The concepts of authority and responsibility
- The models for interpreting agency policies and procedures to staff
- The components of a collegial and positive work environment
- Fiscal management techniques
- The budgetary process
- Governance structures
- The methods used for strategic planning
- Employee recruitment, training, retention, performance appraisal, evaluation and discipline

IV.I.SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION

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

- The stages of professional development
- The educational components, techniques, and methods of supervision
- The models of group supervision
- The models of peer supervision and consultation

- The methods used to identify learning needs and develop learning objectives for supervisees
- Transference and countertransference within supervisory relationships
- The social worker's responsibility to seek and receive appropriate supervision
- Student/supervisee characteristics and suitability for the profession
- The use of case recording/documentation for practice evaluation or supervision

IV.J.RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- Systems of internal controls that minimize risk for clients, workers and the agency
- The methods to create, implement and evaluate policies and procedures that minimize risk for clients, workers and the agency
- The social worker's responsibility to respond to client and/or community concerns
- The policy implications of risk management
- Methods to manage critical incidents including debriefing for clients and staff

V. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICS

24%

V.A.VALUES, BOUNDARIES, AND ETHICS

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

- The effects of differences in values influenced by culture, political beliefs, race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion/spirituality
- Intrinsic worth and value of the individual
- Professional boundary issues
- Dual relationships
- Identification and resolution of ethical dilemmas
- Ethical and legal issues
- Medical issues
- Ethical issues in supervision and management

V.B.CONFIDENTIALITY

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

- Legal and ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic information
- The use of client records
- Ethical and legal issues regarding mandatory reporting of abuse
- The process of obtaining informed consent

V.C.SELF-DETERMINATION

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

- The circumstances under which clients have the right to refuse service
- Individual, group, organization and community self-determination
- The limitations of self-determination
- Clients' rights and grievance procedures

V.D.PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

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

- The social worker's ethical responsibility as a professional
- The social worker's ethical responsibility to broader society
- The social worker's ethical responsibility to the social work profession
- The social worker's ethical responsibility in practice settings
- The social worker's ethical responsibility to colleagues