Commonwealth of Virginia

REGULATIONS

GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK

VIRGINIA BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK

Title of Regulations: 18 VAC 140-20-10 et seq.

Statutory Authority: §§ 54.1-2400 and Chapter 37 of Title 54.1 of the *Code of Virginia*

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Part I. General Provisions.

18VAC140-20-10. Definitions.

A. The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the meanings ascribed to them in §54.1-3700 of the Code of Virginia:

Board

Casework

Casework management and supportive services

Clinical social worker

Practice of social work

Social worker

B. The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Accredited school of social work" means a school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

"Clinical course of study" means graduate course work which includes specialized advanced courses in human behavior and social environment, social policy, research, clinical practice with individuals, families, groups and a clinical practicum which focuses on diagnostic, prevention and treatment services.

"Clinical social work services" include the application of social work principles and methods in performing assessments and diagnoses based on a recognized manual of mental and emotional disorders or recognized system of problem definition, preventive and early intervention services and treatment services, including but not limited to psychotherapy and counseling for mental disorders, substance abuse, marriage and family dysfunction, and problems caused by social and psychological stress or health impairment.

"Exempt practice" is that which meets the conditions of exemption from the requirements of licensure as defined in §54.1-3701 of the Code of Virginia.

"Nonexempt practice" is that which does not meet the conditions of exemption from the requirements of licensure as defined in §54.1-3701 of the Code of Virginia.

"Supervision" means the relationship between a supervisor and supervisee which is designed to promote the development of responsibility and skill in the provision of social work services. Supervision is the inspection, critical evaluation, and direction over the services of the supervisee. Supervision shall include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation.

18VAC140-20-20. [Repealed]

18VAC140-20-30. Fees.

A. The board has established fees for the following:

1. Registration of supervision	$25
2. Application processing	$100
3. Biennial license renewal	
a. Registered social worker	$35
b. Associate social worker	$35
c. Licensed social worker	$110
(From June 1, 2003, to June 1, 2005, the biennial renewal shall be $55)	
d. Licensed clinical social worker	$125
(From June 1, 2003, to June 1, 2005, the biennial renewal shall be $65)	
4. Penalty for late renewal	$10
5. Verification of license to another jurisdiction	$10
6. Additional or replacement licenses	$10
7. Additional or replacement wall certificates	$15
8. Returned check	$35
9. Reinstatement following disciplinary action	$200

B. Fees shall be paid by check or money order made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia and forwarded to the board. All fees are nonrefundable.

C. Examination fees shall be paid directly to the examination service according to its requirements.

18VAC140-20-35. Sex offender treatment provider certification.

Anyone licensed by the board who is seeking certification as a sex offender treatment provider shall obtain certification under the Board of Psychology and adhere to the board's Regulations Governing the Certification of Sex Offender Treatment Providers, 18VAC125-30-10 et seq.

18VAC140-20-37. Licensure; general.

Licensed social workers may practice in exempt practice settings under appropriate supervision. Only licensed clinical social workers may practice at the autonomous level.

Part II. Requirements for Licensure.

18VAC140-20-40. Requirements for licensure by examination.

Every applicant for examination for licensure by the board shall:

1. Meet the education and experience requirements prescribed in 18VAC140-20-50 or 18VAC140-20-60 for the category of practice in which licensure is sought.

2. Submit in one package to the board office, not less than 90 days prior to the date of the written examination:

a. A completed notarized application;

b. Documentation, on the appropriate forms, of the successful completion of the supervised experience requirements of 18VAC140-20-50 or 18VAC140-20-60 along with documentation of the supervisor's out-of-state license where applicable. Applicants whose former supervisor is deceased, or whose whereabouts is unknown, shall submit to the board a notarized affidavit from the present chief executive officer of the agency, corporation or partnership in which the applicant was supervised. The affidavit shall specify dates of employment, job responsibilities, supervisor's name and last known address, and the total number of hours spent by the applicant with the supervisor in face-to-face supervision;

c. The application fee prescribed in 18VAC140-20-30;

d. Official transcript or transcripts in the original sealed envelope submitted from the appropriate institutions of higher education directly to the applicant; and

e. Documentation of applicant's out-of-state licensure where applicable.

18VAC140-20-45. Requirements for licensure by endorsement.

Every applicant for licensure by endorsement shall submit in one package:

1. A completed application and the application fee prescribed in 18VAC140-20-30.

2. Documentation of social work licensure in good standing obtained by standards substantially equivalent to those outlined in 18VAC140-20-50 and 18VAC140-20-60 as verified by the out-of-state licensing agency on a board-approved form.

3. Verification of a passing score as established by the board on a board-approved national exam.

4. Official transcript or transcripts in the school's original sealed envelope.

5. Verification of active practice in another jurisdiction for 36 out of the past 60 months.

6. Certification that the applicant is not the respondent in any pending or unresolved board action in another jurisdiction or in a malpractice claim.

18VAC140-20-50. Education and experience requirements for licensed clinical social worker.

A. Education. The applicant shall hold a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited school of social work. Graduates of foreign institutions shall establish the equivalency of their education to this requirement through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council of Social Work Education.

1. The degree program shall have included a graduate clinical course of study; or

2. The applicant shall provide documentation of having completed specialized experience, course work or training acceptable to the board as equivalent to a clinical course of study.

B. Supervised experience. Supervised experience obtained prior to December 23, 1998, may be accepted towards licensure if this supervision met the requirements of the board which were in effect at the time the supervision was rendered. Supervised experience obtained in nonexempt settings in Virginia without prior written board approval will not be accepted toward licensure.

1. Registration. An individual who proposes to obtain supervised post-master's degree experience in Virginia shall, prior to the onset of such supervision:

a. Register on a form provided by the board and completed by the supervisor and the supervised individual; and

b. Pay the registration of supervision fee set forth in 18VAC140-20-30.

2. Hours. The applicant shall have completed a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised post-master's degree experience in the delivery of clinical social work services. A minimum of one hour of individual face-to-face supervision shall be provided each week for a total of at least 100 hours.

a. Experience shall be acquired in no less than two nor more than four years.

b. Supervisees shall average no less than 15 hours per week in face-to-face client contact for a minimum of 1,380 hours. The remaining hours may be spent in ancillary duties and activities supporting the delivery of clinical services.

3. An individual who does not become a candidate for licensure after four years of supervised experience shall submit evidence to the board showing why the training should be allowed to continue.

C. Requirements for supervisors.

1. The supervisor shall be a licensed clinical social worker in the jurisdiction in which the clinical services are being rendered with at least five years post-Master of Social Work clinical experience. The board may consider supervisors with commensurate qualifications if the applicant can demonstrate an undue burden due to geography or disability.

2. The supervisor shall:

a. Be responsible for the casework activities of the prospective applicant as set forth in this subsection once the supervisory arrangement is accepted;

b. Review and approve the diagnostic assessment and treatment plan of a representative sample of the clients assigned to the applicant during the course of supervision. The sample should be representative of the variables of gender, age, diagnosis, length of treatment and treatment method within the client population seen by the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to assure the representativeness of the sample that is presented to the supervisor. The supervisor shall be available to the applicant on a regularly scheduled basis for supervision. The supervisor will maintain documentation, for five years post supervision, of which clients were the subject of supervision;

c. Provide supervision only for those casework activities for which the supervisor has determined the applicant is competent to provide to clients;

d. Provide supervision only for those activities for which the supervisor is qualified; and

e. Evaluate the supervisee's knowledge and document minimal competencies in the areas of an identified theory base, application of a differential diagnosis, establishing and monitoring a treatment plan, development and appropriate use of the professional relationship, assessing the client for risk of imminent danger, and implementing a professional and ethical relationship with clients.

3. Supervision between members of the immediate family (to include spouses, parents, and siblings) will not be approved.

D. Supervision requirements for applicants in exempt practices. Individuals may obtain the required supervision and experience without registration of supervision provided such experience:

1. Is obtained in an exempt practice; and

2. Meets all other requirements for supervised experience as set forth in this section.

18VAC140-20-60. Education and experience requirements for licensed social worker.

A. Education. The applicant shall hold a bachelor's or a master's degree from an accredited school of social work. Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education to this requirement through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education.

B. Supervised experience. Supervised experience obtained prior to December 23, 1998, may be accepted towards licensure if this supervision met the requirements of the board which were in effect at the time the supervision was rendered. Supervised experience obtained in nonexempt settings in Virginia without prior written board approval will not be accepted toward licensure.

1. Registration. An individual who proposes to obtain supervised post-master's degree experience in Virginia shall, prior to the onset of such supervision, register a supervision contract with the board as set forth in 18VAC140-20-50 B.

2. Hours.

a. Bachelor's degree applicants shall have completed a minimum of 3,000 hours of full-time post-bachelor's degree experience or the equivalent in part-time experience in casework management and supportive services under supervision satisfactory to the board. A minimum of one hour of face-to-face supervision shall be provided each week for the period of supervision for a total of at least 100 hours.

b. Experience shall be acquired in no less than two nor more than four years.

C. Requirements for supervisors.

1. The supervisor providing supervision shall be a licensed social worker with a master's degree or a licensed clinical social worker in the jurisdiction in which the social work services are being rendered. If this requirement places an undue burden on the applicant due to geography or disability, the board may consider individuals with comparable qualifications.

2. The supervisor shall:

a. Be responsible for the social work practice of the prospective applicant once the supervisory arrangement is accepted by the board;

b. Review and approve the assessment and service plan of a representative sample of cases assigned to the applicant during the course of supervision. The sample should be representative of the variables of gender, age, assessment, length of service and casework method within the client population seen by the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to assure the representativeness of the sample that is presented to the supervisor. The supervisor shall be available to the applicant on a regularly scheduled basis for supervision. The supervisor will maintain documentation, for five years post supervision, of which clients were the subject of supervision;

c. Provide supervision only for those casework management and support services activities for which the supervisor has determined the applicant is competent to provide to clients;

d. Provide supervision only for those activities for which the supervisor is qualified; and

e. Evaluate the supervisee in the areas of professional ethics and professional competency.

3. Supervision between members of the immediate family (to include spouses, parents, and siblings) will not be approved.

D. Supervision requirements for applicants in exempt practice. Individuals may obtain the required supervised experience without registration of supervision provided such experience:

1. Is obtained in an exempt practice; and

2. Meets all other requirements of the board for supervised experience as set forth in this section.

Part III. Examinations.

18VAC140-20-70. Examination requirement.

A. An applicant for licensure by the board as a social worker or clinical social worker shall pass a written examination prescribed by the board.

B. The board shall establish passing scores on the written examination.

C. A candidate approved by the board to sit for an examination shall take that examination within two years of the date of the initial board approval. If the candidate has not taken the examination by the end of the two-year period here prescribed, the applicant shall reapply according to the requirements of the regulations in effect at that time.

18VAC140-20-80 to 18VAC140-20-90. [Repealed]

Part IV. Licensure Renewal; Reinstatement.

18VAC140-20-100. Licensure renewal.

A. All licensees shall renew their licenses on or before June 30 of each odd-numbered year and pay the renewal fee prescribed by the board.

B. Beginning with the 2003 renewal, licensees who wish to maintain an active license shall pay the appropriate fee and document on the renewal form compliance with the continued competency requirements prescribed in 18VAC140-20-105. Newly licensed individuals are not required to document continuing education on the first renewal date following initial licensure.

C. A licensee who wishes to place his license in inactive status may do so upon payment of a fee equal to one-half of the biennial license renewal fee as indicated on the renewal form. No person shall practice social work or clinical social work in Virginia unless he holds a current active license. A licensee who has placed himself in inactive status may become active by fulfilling the reactivation requirements set forth in 18VAC140-20-110.

D. Failure to receive a renewal notice from the board shall not relieve the licensee from the renewal requirement.

18VAC140-20-105. Continued competency requirements for renewal of an active license.

A. Licensed clinical social workers shall be required to have completed a minimum of 30 contact hours of continuing education and licensed social workers shall be required to have completed a minimum of 15 contact hours of continuing education for each biennial licensure renewal. A minimum of two of those hours must pertain to the standards of practice and laws governing the profession of social work in Virginia, or the Code of Ethics of one of the social work professional associations listed under subdivision B 1 d.

1. The board may grant an extension for good cause of up to one year for the completion of continuing education requirements upon written request from the licensee prior to the renewal date. Such extension shall not relieve the licensee of the continuing education requirement.

2. The board may grant an exemption for all or part of the continuing education requirements due to circumstances beyond the control of the licensee such as temporary disability, mandatory military service, or officially declared disasters.

B. Hours may be obtained from a combination of board-approved activities in the following two categories:

1. Category I. Formally Organized Learning Activities. A minimum of 20 hours for licensed clinical social workers or 10 hours for licensed social workers shall be documented in this category, which shall include one or more of the following:

a. Regionally accredited university or college academic courses in a behavioral health discipline. A maximum of 15 hours will be accepted for each academic course.

b. Continuing education programs offered by universities or colleges accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

c. Workshops, seminars, conferences, or courses in the behavioral health field offered by federal, state or local social service agencies, public school systems or licensed health facilities and licensed hospitals.

d. Workshops, seminars, conferences or courses in the behavioral health field offered by an individual or organization that has been certified or approved by one of the following:

(1) The Child Welfare League of America an d its state and local affiliates.

(2) The National Association of Social Workers and its state and local affiliates.

(3) The Association of Black Social Workers and its state and local affiliates.

(4) The Family Service Association of America and its state and local affiliates.

(5) The Clinical Social Work Organization and its state and local affiliates.

(6) Individuals or organizations who have been approved as continuing education sponsors by the Association of Social Work Boards or any state social work board.

2. Category II. Individual Professional Activities. A maximum of 10 of the required 30 hours for licensed clinical social workers or a maximum of five of the required 15 hours for licensed social workers may be earned in this category, which shall include one or more of the following:

a. Participation in an Association of Social Work Boards item writing workshop. (Activity will count for a maximum of two hours.)

b. Publication of a professional social work-related book or initial preparation/presentation of a social work-related course. (Activity will count for a maximum of 10 hours.)

c. Publication of a professional social work-related article or chapter of a book, or initial preparation/presentation of a social work-related in-service training, seminar or workshop. (Activity will count for a maximum of five hours.)

d. Provision of a continuing education program sponsored or approved by an organization listed under Category I. (Activity will count for a maximum of two hours and will only be accepted one time for any specific program.)

e. Field instruction of graduate students in a Council on Social Work Education-accredited school. (Activity will count for a maximum of two hours.)

f. Serving as an officer or committee member of one of the national professional social work associations listed under subdivision B 1 d of this section. (Activity will count for a maximum of two hours.)

g. Attendance at formal staffings at federal, state or local social service agencies, public school systems or licensed health facilities and licensed hospitals. (Activity will count for a maximum of five hours.)

h. Independent or group study including listening to audio tapes, viewing video tapes, reading, professional books or articles. (Activity will count for a maximum of five hours.)

18VAC140-20-106. Documenting compliance with continuing education requirements.

A. All licensees in active status are required to maintain original documentation for a period of five years following renewal.

B. After the end of each renewal period, the board shall conduct a random audit of licensees to verify compliance with the requirement for that renewal period.

C. Upon request, a licensee shall provide documentation as follows:

1. To document completion of Category I activities licensee shall provide:

a. Official transcripts showing credit hours earned; or

b. Certificates of participation.

2. Documentation of Category II activities shall be by:

a. Certificates of participation;

b. Proof of presentations made;

c. Reprints of publications;

d. Letters from educational institutions or agencies approving continuing education program;

e. Letter of confirmation from the school of social work;

f. Official notification from the association that sponsored the item writing workshop or continuing education program;

g. Documentation of attendance at formal staffings shall be by signed affidavit on a form provided by the board; or

h. Identification of the source of material studied, summary of content, and a signed affidavit attesting to completion of the independent study.

D. Continuing education hours required by disciplinary order shall not be used to satisfy renewal requirements.

18VAC140-20-110. Late renewal; reinstatement; reactivation.

A. A social worker or clinical social worker whose license has expired may renew that license within four years after its expiration date by:

1. Providing evidence of having met all applicable continuing education requirements.

2. Paying the penalty for late renewal and the biennial license fee for each biennium as prescribed in 18VAC140-20-30.

B. A social worker or clinical social worker who fails to renew the license for four years or more and who wishes to resume practice shall apply for reinstatement, pay the reinstatement fee and provide documentation of having completed all applicable continued competency hours equal to the number of years the license has lapsed, not to exceed four years.

C. A social worker wishing to reactivate an inactive license shall submit the renewal fee for active licensure minus any fee already paid for inactive licensure renewal, and document completion of continued competency hours equal to the number of years the license has been inactive, not to exceed four years.

18VAC140-20-120. [Repealed]

18VAC140-20-130. Renewal of registration for associate social workers and registered social workers.

The registration of every associate social worker and registered social worker with the former Virginia Board of Registration of Social Workers under former §54-775.4 of the Code of Virginia shall expire on June 30 of each odd-numbered year.

1. Each registrant shall return the completed application before the expiration date, accompanied by the payment of the renewal fee prescribed by the board.

2. Failure to receive the renewal notice shall not relieve the registrant from the renewal requirement.

Part V. Committees.

18VAC140-20-140. Examining and advisory committees.

The board may establish advisory and examining committees to assist it in carrying out statutory responsibilities.

1. The committees may assist in evaluating the professional qualifications of applicants and candidates for licensure and renewal of licenses and in other matters the board deems necessary.

2. The committees may assist in the evaluation of the mental or emotional competency, or both, of any licensee or applicant for licensure when such competence is an issue before the board.

Part VI. Standards of Practice.

18VAC140-20-150. Professional conduct.

Persons licensed as social workers and clinical social workers shall:

1. Practice in a manner that is in the best interest of the public and does not endanger the public health, safety, or welfare.

2. Be able to justify all service rendered to clients as necessary for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.

3. Practice only within the competency areas for which they are qualified by education or experience, or both.

4. Report to the board known or suspected violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of social work.

5. Neither accept nor give commissions, rebates, or other forms of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services.

6. Ensure that clients are aware of fees and billing arrangements before rendering services.

7. Keep confidential their therapeutic relationships with clients and disclose client records to others only with written consent of the client, with the following exceptions: (i) when the client is a danger to self or others; or (ii) as required by law.

8. When advertising their services to the public, ensure that such advertising is neither fraudulent nor misleading.

9. Not engage in dual relationships with clients, former clients, supervisees, and supervisors that might compromise that person's well-being, impair the social worker's or supervisor's objectivity and professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation, to include, but is not limited to, such

activities as counseling close friends, sexual partners, employees or relatives, and engaging in business relationships with clients. Sexual contact or conduct of a sexual nature during the course of professional services and for a period of not less than two years following cessation or termination of professional services with a client or those included in the provision of collateral therapeutic services shall be prohibited. Thereafter, the licensee shall bear the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation regardless of that person's consent to, initiation of or participation in the sexual contact or conduct of a sexual nature with the practitioner.

10. Maintain clinical records on each client. The record shall include identifying information to substantiate diagnosis and treatment plan, client progress, and termination. The clinical record shall be preserved for at least five years post termination.

11. Ensure that clients have provided informed consent to treatment.

18VAC140-20-160. Grounds for disciplinary action or denial of issuance of a license.

Action by the board to deny, revoke, suspend or decline to renew a license shall be in accordance with the following:

1. Conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;

2. Procurement of license by fraud or misrepresentation;

3. Conducting one's practice in such a manner so as to make the practice a danger to the health and welfare of one's clients or to the public. In the event a question arises concerning the continued competence of a licensee, the board will consider evidence of continuing education.

4. Being unable to practice social work with reasonable skill and safety to clients by reason of illness, excessive use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, chemicals or any other type of material or as a result of any mental or physical condition;

5. Conducting one's practice in a manner contrary to the standards of ethics of social work or in violation of 18VAC140-20-150, standards of practice;

6. Performing functions outside the board-licensed area of competency;

7. Failure to comply with the continued competency requirements set forth in 18VAC140-20-105; and

8. Violating or aiding and abetting another to violate any statute applicable to the practice of social work or any provision of this chapter.

18VAC140-20-170. Reinstatement following disciplinary action.

Any person whose license has been suspended, revoked, or denied renewal by the board under the provisions of 18VAC140-20-160 shall, in order to be eligible for reinstatement, (i) submit a new application to the board for a license, (ii) pay the appropriate reinstatement fee, and (iii) submit any

other credentials as prescribed by the board. After a hearing, the board may, at its discretion, grant the reinstatement.

18VAC140-20-171. Criteria for delegation of informal fact-finding proceedings to an agency subordinate.

A. Decision to delegate. In accordance with § 54.1-2400 (10) of the Code of Virginia, the board may delegate an informal fact-finding proceeding to an agency subordinate upon determination that probable cause exists that a practitioner may be subject to a disciplinary action.

B. Criteria for delegation. Cases that may not be delegated to an agency subordinate include violations of standards of practice as set forth in 18 VAC 140-20-150, except as may otherwise be determined by the probable cause committee in consultation with the board chair.

C. Criteria for an agency subordinate.

1. An agency subordinate authorized by the board to conduct an informal fact-finding proceeding may include board members and professional staff or other persons deemed knowledgeable by virtue of their training and experience in administrative proceedings involving the regulation and discipline of health professionals.

2. The executive director shall maintain a list of appropriately qualified persons to whom an informal fact-finding proceeding may be delegated.

3. The board may delegate to the executive director the selection of the agency subordinate who is deemed appropriately qualified to conduct a proceeding based on the qualifications of the subordinate and the type of case being heard.