

Social Work Licensure

ASWB Examination Preparation:

New Resources for Overcoming Long-standing Problems and Fears

Dawn Apgar, PhD, LSW, ACSW

Author of the bestselling Social Work Licensing Guides and Practice Tests

December 9, 2020

— About Me

Faculty at Seton Hall University

- Has taught part-time or full-time in social work higher education for 20 years
-

Social work practice experience

- Housing and supportive services to low-income families
- Direct assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families
- Research and policy work in academia and public sector


Leadership positions and experience in profession

- National Association of Social Workers – state/national
 - Lifetime Achievement Award
 - Academic of the Year
- Chairperson of state licensing board
- Ethics training and consultation
- Policies on professional impairment
- Professional publications on teaching, licensure, professional identity, etc.



Which BEST describes you and your interest in this webinar?

- A. **Student or practitioner** who will be taking a licensure test in the future
- B. **Undergraduate or graduate educator** interested in learning more or wanting to prepare students for the test
- C. **Social work administrator or supervisor** interested in helping prepare others pass the test
- D. **Provider of licensure test prep programs** (association, company, etc.)
- E. **Staff of an association or other entity** interested in hosting licensure prep programs in the future
- F. **Other?**



Now you know
about me...
let's learn about
you.

Learning Objectives

1. Attendees will identify the systemic and individual **challenges** associated with passing licensure examinations.

2. Attendees will describe **successful strategies** to address challenges in licensure examination study plans.

3. Attendees will explain the innovative ways in which the **Springer Social Work Exam Prep Series Study Guides & Practice Tests** assists in licensure examination preparation.

Licensure is
important to
social workers.

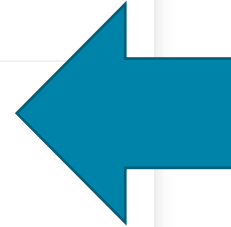
- Increases **post-graduation outcomes** related to earnings, employment, etc.
 - 62.3% of MSW graduates are employed in jobs that require a license.
 - Jobs for new MSW graduates that required a license paid almost \$3,000 more on average.
- Results in **high satisfaction of students/graduates**
 - Four of five new MSW graduates (80.6%) either planned to become licensed clinical social workers within the next 5 years or were already licensed.

We know that some
social workers struggle
with passing the
examination.

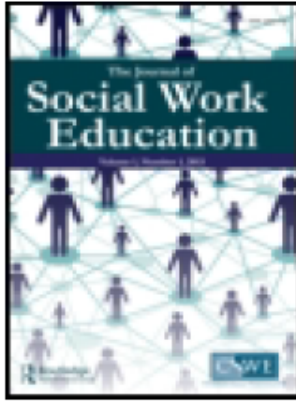
(first-time test takers only)
2019 pass rate

Exam	Total number of exams	2019 pass rate
Associate	304	74.0%
Bachelors	3,565	67.4%
Masters	18,211	74.0%
Advanced Generalist	127	66.9%
Clinical	17,187	74.2%

Examination Fees:
US\$230 Associate, Bachelors, or Masters exam
US\$260 Advanced Generalist or Clinical exam



2019 Data



Journal of Social Work Education

ISSN: 1043-7797 (Print) 2163-5811 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uswe20>

The Great Divide Between Social Work Educational Policy and Licensure Examinations: Differing Approaches to Identifying Competency That are Challenging the Profession

Dawn Apgar

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To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1671273>

What does it take to pass the licensure exam?

- A. Taking time out of your schedule to study
- B. Keeping calm when studying and taking the test
- C. Analyzing the questions correctly
- D. Knowing the social work content areas



What does it take to pass the licensure exam?

A. Taking time out of your schedule to study

B. Keeping calm when studying and taking the test

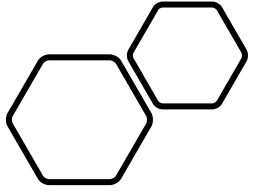
C. Analyzing the questions correctly

D. Knowing the social work content areas



There is no time like the present to take the licensure tests!

- Test takers report that it is easier to prepare when tests are taken closer to graduation from BSW or MSW programs.
- Avoid procrastination – there is never the “right” time” and it does not get easier.
- In some jurisdictions, licensure tests can be taken prior to graduation while in others they cannot.



Develop a study plan



Use the content outline or blueprint of the test to become familiar with what is being tested



Have a real or target test date and identify incremental steps that you will take between now and then to cover the material



Build in breaks and avoid “cramming”



Understand material so it can be applied and used in reasoning

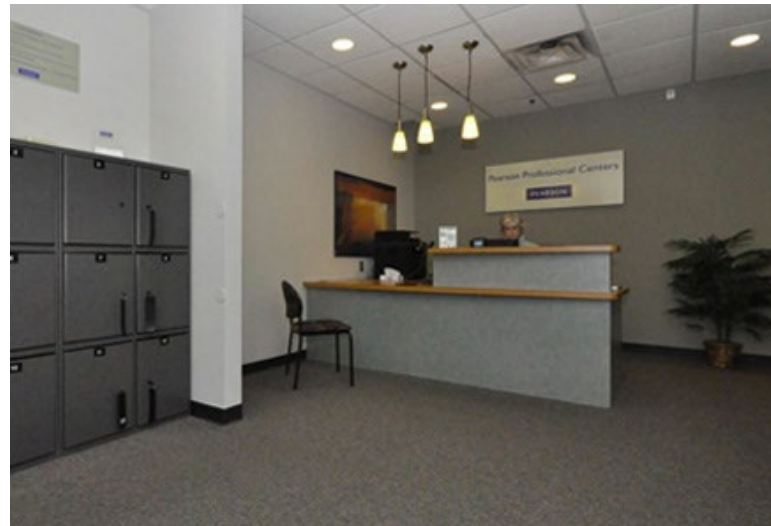


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Licensure exams are high stakes which cause stress.



There is a lot of security at testing sites which increase nervousness.

Managing stress

<https://www.springerpub.com/apgar>



10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ASWB EXAMINATIONS

- 1 All of the ASWB examinations have the same format: listening that each has the same number of questions that each test taker is given the same amount of time to complete. There are 170 multiple-choice questions and you will have 4 hours from the time that you start answering the questions. You can take brief restroom breaks or drink water, but the clock does not stop and these activities will be included in your 4-hour limit, so you want to be familiar with your time.
- 2 You do not want to leave any questions blank or answer all 170 questions in the 4 hours.
- 3 It is critical that you know the importance of macro and micro level interventions. These questions are the highest priority and are asked first in the exam. The highest-priority questions are asked first in the exam. The highest-priority questions are asked first in the exam. The highest-priority questions are asked first in the exam.
- 4 Stick to your typical routine. Take the exam at the time that you usually study, study, and take the exam at the time that you usually study. Stick to your typical routine. Take the exam at the time that you usually study, study, and take the exam at the time that you usually study.
- 5 You will be taking your examination at a testing center with others who are being tested in different disciplines and may be taking breaks at longer examinations, so do not be concerned if they finish before or after you.
- 6 Closely monitored. You will be in a room with other test takers and you will be monitored by a camera. You will be in a room with other test takers and you will be monitored by a camera. You will be in a room with other test takers and you will be monitored by a camera.
- 7 The test is not being done in a random order. You will be taking your examination at a testing center with others who are being tested in different disciplines and may be taking breaks at longer examinations, so do not be concerned if they finish before or after you.
- 8 Although the ASWB exam is a closed exam and you may restate your answers to items all the while, the questions on the examination are in random order. You will be taking your examination at a testing center with others who are being tested in different disciplines and may be taking breaks at longer examinations, so do not be concerned if they finish before or after you.
- 9 The number of questions that you have to get correct generally varies from 83 to 106 of the 170 scored items. You will be taking your examination at a testing center with others who are being tested in different disciplines and may be taking breaks at longer examinations, so do not be concerned if they finish before or after you.
- 10 If you do not pass the examination, you will not have the same questions repeated on any of your examinations in the future. You will be taking your examination at a testing center with others who are being tested in different disciplines and may be taking breaks at longer examinations, so do not be concerned if they finish before or after you.

Taken from **Social Work Licensing Masters Exam A Comprehensive Study Guide, Third Edition**
By Dawn Apgar, PhD, LSW, ACSW
See the entire exam prep series here: <https://www.springerpub.com/apgar>

If you have questions about the examination or testing, such as the address for sending your passes, visit us on our website at www.springerpub.com/apgar. The ASWB Examination Candidate Handbook, which is free and located on this website, provides additional information about what to expect for the examination that may be useful.

SPRINGER PUBLISHING

Take a virtual tour of the testing center/become familiarize with exam format

Go to new testing location if retaking the exam



Follow test preparation plan



Engage in self-care





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Social workers are often unfamiliar with multiple choice tests.

The following example will assist with identifying the parts of a sample multiple-choice question.

A client states that he has received services in the past and "it did not work out." He appears tense and angry, telling the social worker that he does not want the social worker to speak with his prior provider. In order to best assist the client, the social worker should FIRST:

- A. Ask the client what did not go well in the past ← *Distractor*
- B. Assure the client that the prior provider will not be contacted without his permission ← *Key*
- C. Tell the client that services will only be focused on current problems ← *Distractor*
- D. Explain that effective treatment requires knowing what has been done in the past ← *Distractor*

Qualifying word

Stem



Other test-taking challenges

Identifying method for analyzing three types of questions:


- **Recall** – based on facts and are information that you can recognize or remember from readings
- **Application** – using information learned to determine course of action in short, concise situation
- **Reasoning** – requires reasoning or to select courses of action in more complex situations



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Recent workforce data indicate the focus of more than eight out of 10 of new social workers (81.5%) is on direct or clinical practice which aims at making change on an individual level.

There is often surprise about the need to know mezzo or macro content.



Social workers have to know about a lot of topics, regardless of specialization of focus.

Social workers often have to learn new content in gap areas.



Some social workers report having poor study skills.



There can be a large time gap between testing and learning the material originally.

Springer Social Work Exam Prep Series Study Guides & Practice Tests

"I was really impressed with Dawn's presentation and knowledge on exam preparation for the ASWB test. I was also impressed with Dawn's ability to deal with individual students' concerns. Aside from her presentation skills and knowledge, the books she provided at the workshops were very helpful in guiding the participants. They were a very helpful resource for the students and I can see them being used in the future. I have read through the books and can confidently say the books present important information for students who are looking to pass the exams-and are written in a way that is accessible to a diverse range of students."

Taylene Watson, ACSW, LICSW
Executive Director
NASW Washington State Chapter

"Our NASW Chapter has been using Dawn Apgar's Master and Clinical Social Work exam guides in conjunction with our test preparation courses since they were first published, and we continue to receive rave reviews. Our course attendees have thanked us repeatedly for providing them a user-friendly guide that makes their study process a whole lot less stressful and they love now having access to the mobile app version as well! There are many reasons that these guides are the go-to for our social workers – they're helping thousands of our New Jersey social workers become licensed and be ready for the professional world."

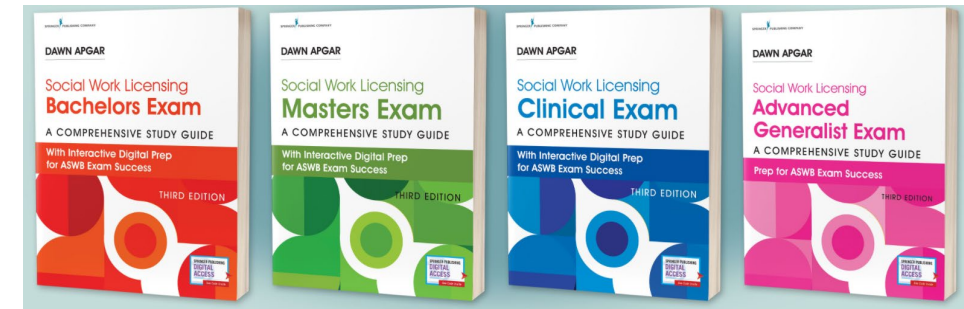
Jennifer Thompson, MSW
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers – New Jersey Chapter

"In desperation to study to pass the LCSW exam, I used web sites that promised to help one study to pass the test, practice tests from who knows where and then finally Dawn Apgar's books for the Clinical and Masters exams. Her logic and explanations for testing/content were spot on and the practice test with explanation on why the answer was the correct answer helped me pass the LCSW exam the first time. Her content and wording of the practice questions were the most like the actual ASWB LCSW exam. My suggestion: Don't mess around with web sites offering help to study/pass the test; read Dawn's books and that's all you need."

Christine Mize
Licensed Clinical Social Worker/Bereavement Counselor
Hospice of Southern Illinois

"I purchased Dr. Dawn Apgar's Social Work ASWB Clinical Exam Guide and Practice Test Set: A Comprehensive Study Guide for Success after purchasing and studying from other study guides and with friends who already passed the exam. I wish I had purchased it first, since it was the most up-to-date and complete of the materials I used to study. It was also the most affordable. She presented the material in a narrative, while explaining the thinking/philosophy of a clinical exam. The introduction was very important as were all the 350 pages. If you are a social worker who needs to complete your clinical, get these materials, relax and spend time immersing yourself in what you need to know. You won't have to be concerned about jumping from book to book or internet sites. Good luck!"

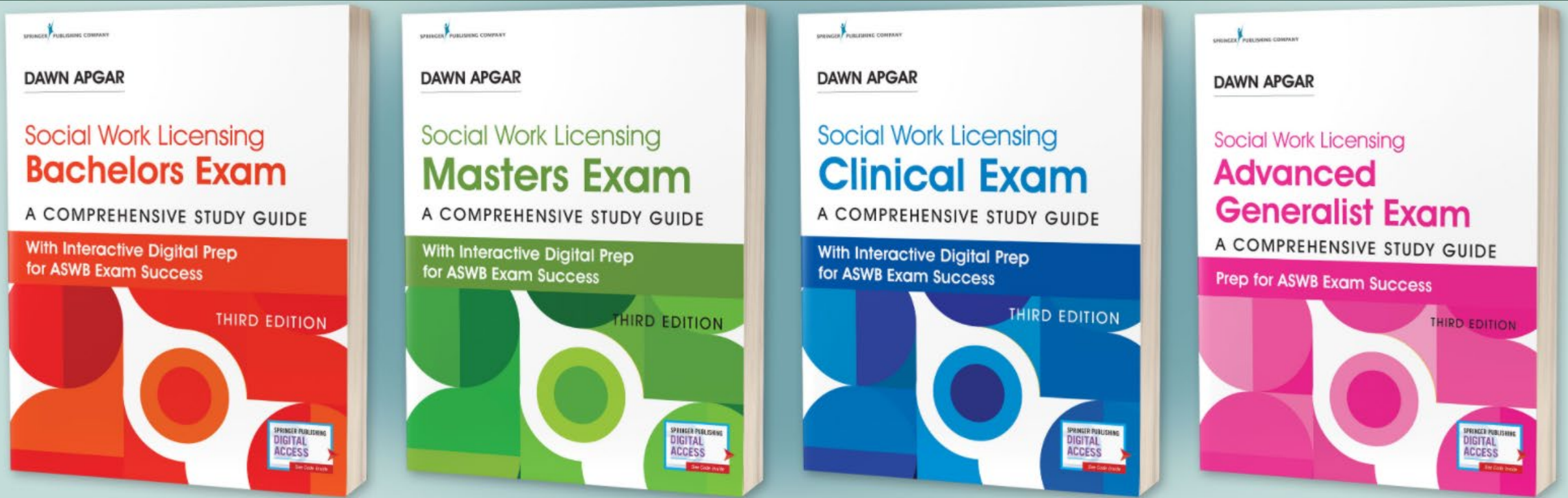
Mercy Austen - Student



TESTIMONIALS

What people are saying!

<https://www.springerpub.com/apgar>

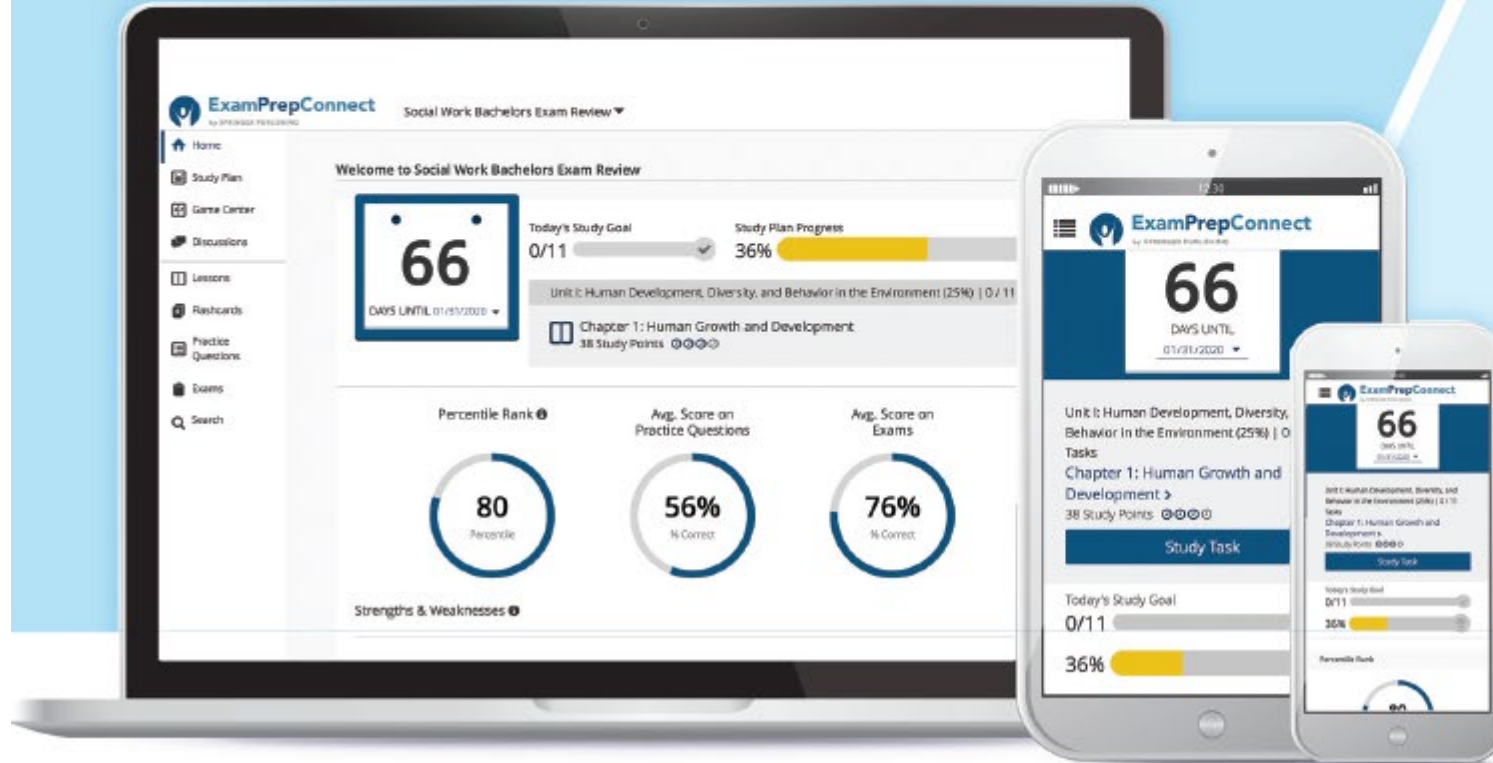


There are distinct resources for each examination category!

6 MONTHS OF EXAMPREPCONNECT DIGITAL ACCESS INCLUDED WITH PRINT PURCHASE*

The **PRIMARY** reason for using structured decision making in child welfare service delivery is:

- A** Advocacy
- B** Consistency
- C** Transparency
- D** Homogeneity



*Excluding Advanced Generalist Practice Test



ExamPrepConnect

by SPRINGER PUBLISHING

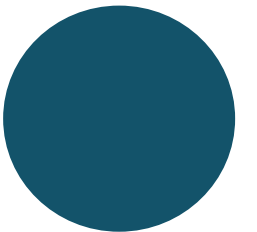
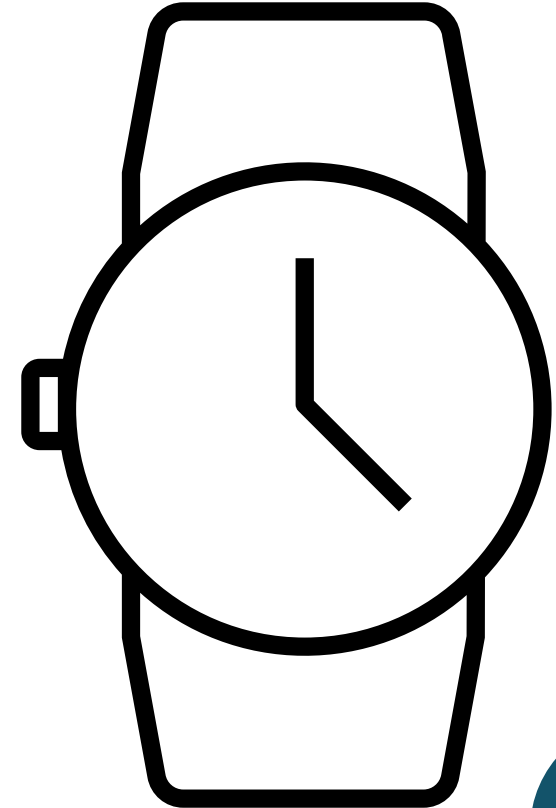


The “Fitbit” of Social Work Exam Prep

Develops

individualized study plan

to ensure test takers pace themselves
appropriately to cover all content



- Home
- Study Plan
- Game Center
- Discussions
- Lessons
- Flashcards
- Practice Questions
- Exams
- Search

**Let Exam Prep Connect
Help Create a
Customized Study Plan**

**Need a Break – No
Problem!**



73
DAYS UNTIL 12/30/2020

Today's Study Goal

0/16

Study Plan Progress

2%

Course Introduction | 0 / 4 Tasks

About the Examination
4 Study Points



More

Study Task >>

✓ Social Work Masters Exam Review Overview | 2 Tasks | 13 Study Points

|| Course Introduction | 4 Tasks | 38 Study Points

About the Examination
4 Study Points

Test-Taking Strategies and Tips
27 Study Points

Reduces
anxiety as
you are not
alone!

Learning Management System/ Online Learning Community

- Public/private discussion boards with others studying and taking the same test
- Additional resources and strategies posted by author
- Ability for users to share study tips, materials, and strategies with other test-takers

- Home
- Study Plan
- Game Center
- Discussions**
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Public Discussions ⓘ

Filter ▾

What do you want to discuss...

KB

Due to covid NJ is asking that applications for the preapproval process be sent to an email in addition to the mail. I am not sure what to do with the transcript. do I send a copy to the email address? Have the school send the link for an electronic version to the email address? Any thoughts on this would be much appreciated!

Created a day ago by Kathleen Bakos

1 reply | Last activity: 3 hours ago

Hide All Replies

Reply to this Comment

DA

Your comment is specific to the process in New Jersey. Currently materials for preapproval are to be mailed AND sent to the email address on the New Jersey Board of Social Work Examiners website. Some schools (New Jersey based) have sent lists of graduates to the Board already. However, if you attended a university that does not have such a relationship with the Board, you will need to include your transcript with the mail submission and a copy in the email.

Edit ▾

Dawn Apgar replied 3 hours ago

FW

What's the web address to schedule an exam? I went to aswb.org and I continuously arrive at the page where we need to pay. I already paid and have a receipt number but I can't find what the next step is and where. Thanks in advance

Created 2 days ago by Feiga Weinstock







3 replies | Last activity: a day ago

Show All Replies

Reply to this Comment

EC

I realize this might be different state to state, but I was wondering how people are finding scheduling the exam. How far have you had to schedule it out? I've heard that people

 Home Study Plan Game Center Discussions Lessons Flashcards Practice Questions Exams Search

Discussions

Public

Private

Welcome to private groups.

You can join a private group in 2 ways -

1. Create your own group & invite others
2. Be invited into a group by someone else

You will receive a notification & email if you are invited into a group.

Use private groups to interact with specific individuals or groups of people.

Enjoy!

[Create group](#)

Create a Private Study Group with Supervisees, Coworkers, Peers, or Students

SECTION I: ABOUT THE EXAMINATION, STUDY STRATEGIES, A TEST-TAKING TIPS

THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION

- Test Construction
- Types of Questions
- Examination Structure and Conditions

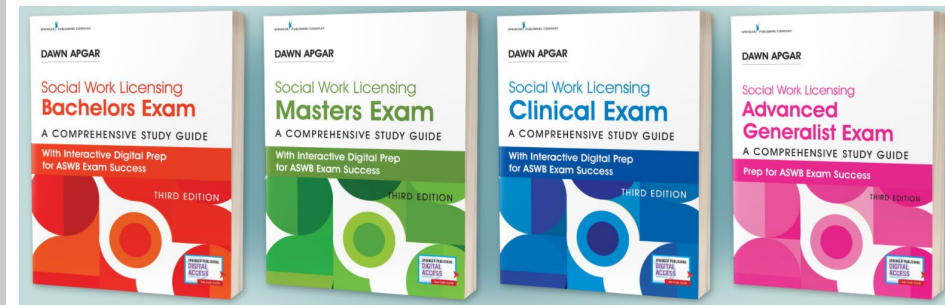
STUDYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

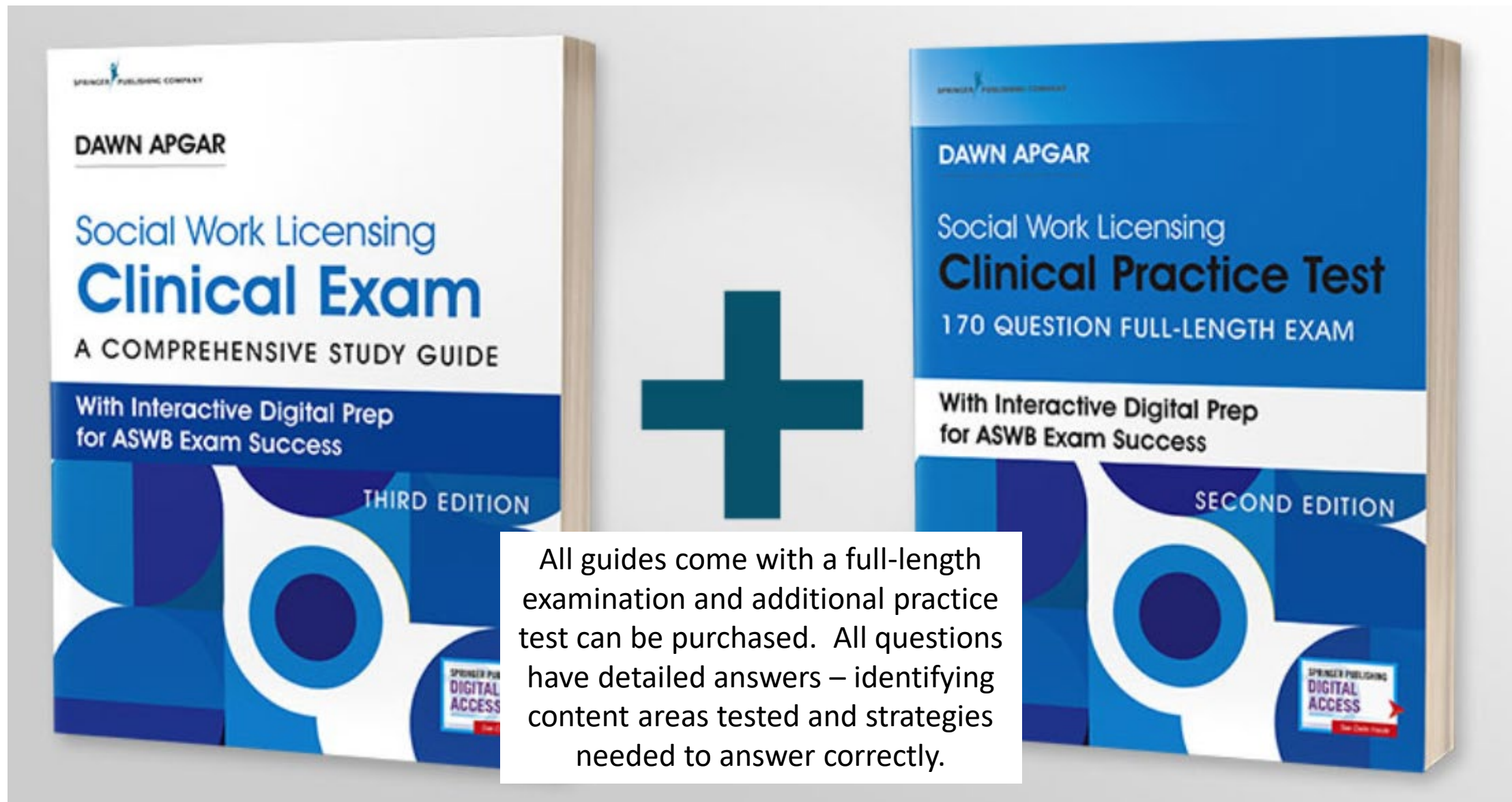
- Study Materials and Time Frame
- Considerations When Studying
 - Build Focus and Stamina*
 - Prioritize Content*
 - Concentrate on Understanding over Memorization*
 - Respect Learning Style*
- Manage Test Anxiety

TIPS FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS CORRECTLY

- Using the Best Overall Approach
- Remembering Important Question Features
- Focusing on Question Formatting and Wording

Comprehensive tips for studying and answering the questions correctly are included in every guide.

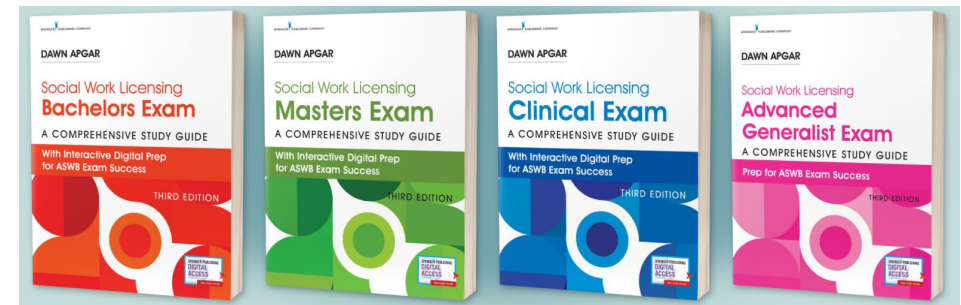




CONTENT AREA I: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT (27%)

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All guides have a summary of the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) statements that form the basis of the exam blueprints.



Makes studying fun!

Interactive interface with exam content

- Notetaking, highlighting, rating of confidence levels
- Game center
- Discussion posts
- Digital flashcards
- Test takers can contribute to and benefit from resources – “mutual help approach”

Home

Study Plan

Game Center

Discussions

Lessons

Flashcards

Practice Questions



Exams

Search


Flashcards Study My Sets Community Sets


Community Flashcard Sets 16 sets total

Sort ▼

Set Name	Set Type	Provider	# of Cards	# of Subscribers
Psychopharmacology 	Community	Shauna Donovan	68 Cards	7 Subscribers
Medications 	Community	Megan Slubowski	55 Cards	11 Subscribers
Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics	Community	Teresa Leitch	10 Cards	9 Subscribers
Erikson	Community	Stacey Balla	6 Cards	13 Subscribers
Assessment and Intervention Planning	Community	Teresa Leitch	12 Cards	6 Subscribers
Personality Disorders	Community	Melissa Heywood	13 Cards	10 Subscribers
Reliability and Validity in Research	Community	Melissa Heywood	11 Cards	6 Subscribers
Techniques and Instruments for Assessment	Community	Melissa Heywood	7 Cards	8 Subscribers
Freud	Community	Melissa Heywood	17 Cards	12 Subscribers
Learning Theories	Community	Melissa Heywood	4 Cards	4 Subscribers

 Home


 Study Plan


 **Game Center**


 Discussions

 Lessons

 Flashcards

 Practice Questions

 Exams

 Search

Game Center

Dashboard

Card Picker

Card Hunter I

Card Hunter II

Card Coupler

Card Sweeper

Sudden Death

Card Picker



Your highest score: 0

Your rank: 256

[Start playing](#)

[Leaderboard](#)

Top 1: Max English - 871122

Top 2: Mary Ferguson - 489036

Top 3: Maureen Patterson - 285790

Card Hunter I



Your highest score: 0

Your rank: Not yet determined

[Start playing](#)

[Leaderboard](#)

Top 1: Jennifer Pinkard - 1964

Top 2: Andrea Schneider - 1942

Top 3: McKenzie - 1933

Card Hunter II



Your highest score: 0

Your rank: Not yet determined

[Start playing](#)

[Leaderboard](#)

Top 1: Max English - 6784

Top 2: Esther Teitelbaum - 6621

Top 3: Amy Barrett - 6601

Card Coupler



Your highest score: 0

Your rank: Not yet determined

[Start playing](#)

[Leaderboard](#)

Top 1: Colleen Rupp - 1975

Top 2: Hanan Adam - 1850

Top 3: Sarah Gardner - 1825

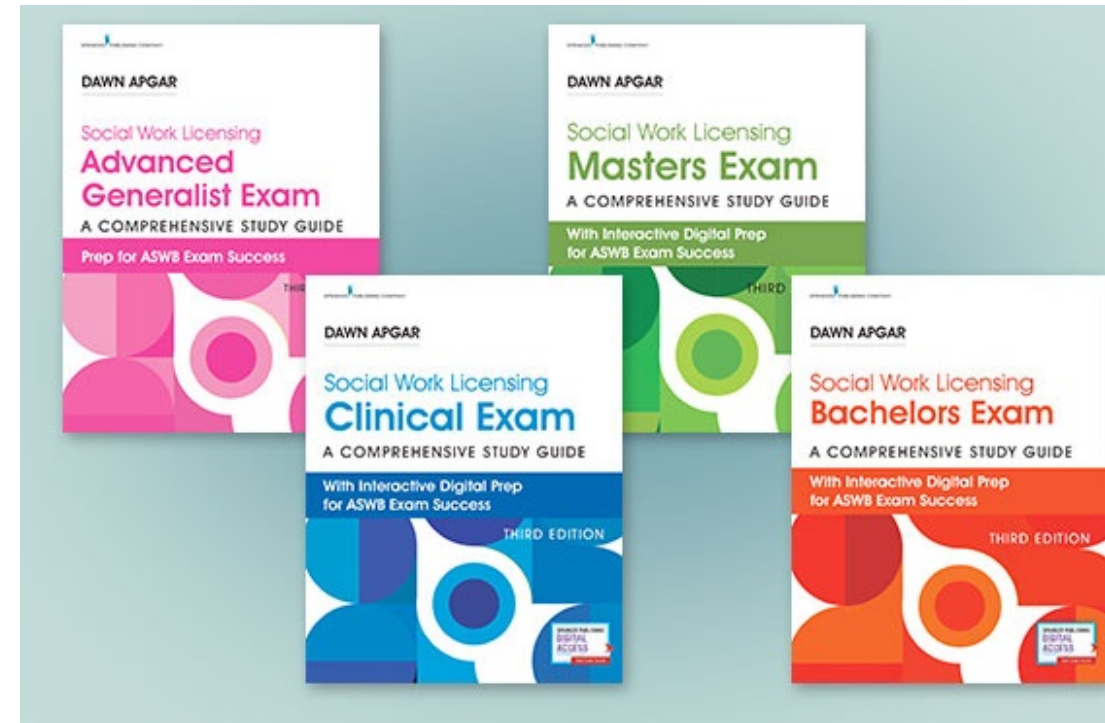
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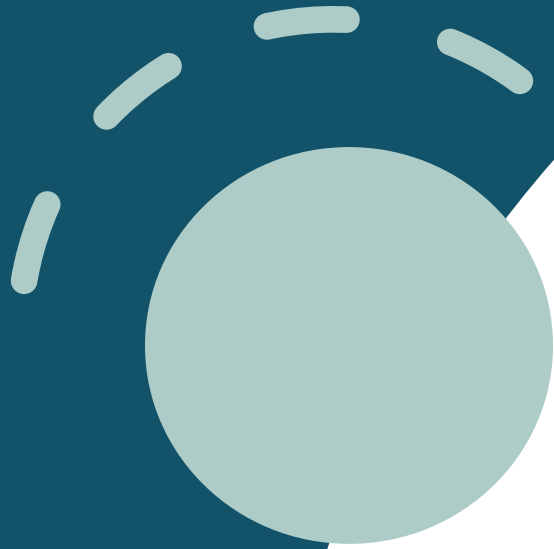
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View product information here:

<https://www.springerpub.com/apgar>



Questions and Answers



Thank you for watching!
Be safe and we will see you soon!

Additional questions may be sent to
lmontville@springerpub.com