

Social Work Licensure Compact Commission

Rules Document

Title of Rule:

Chapter 2 Rule on Qualifying National Exam

Vote on Rule:

This rule will be discussed and voted on at the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission meeting on September 4th, 2025.

Public comment:

Interested persons may electronically submit written comments on the proposed rule to socialworkcompact@csg.org with the subject line "Social Work Licensure Compact Rule Comment". Public comments on the proposed rule shall be submitted 48 hours before the meeting.

Effective:

Upon passage

Reason for Rule:

To further define Qualifying National Exam pursuant to Section 2 and Section 4 of the Social Work Licensure Compact, while respecting Home State authority within the statutory framework.

History for Rule:

Feb 4, 2025: Rule Proposed at Social Work Compact Commission Meeting

Chapter 2: Rule on Qualifying National Exam

Authority: Section 2: Definitions

Section 4: Social Worker Participation in the Compact

Section 12: Rulemaking

1.0 Purpose:

Pursuant to Section 12, the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission shall promulgate reasonable and lawful uniform rules to facilitate and coordinate implementation and administration of the Social Work Licensure Compact. This rule will become effective upon passage by the Social Work Licensure Commission as provided in Section 12. Nothing in this Rule limits the Commission's authority under Article 4.B(1)(c), 4.C(1)(c) or 4.D(1)(c) of the Compact to recognize additional examinations by rule.

1.1 Qualifying National Exam:

A. Clinical-Category Qualifying National Exam: As set forth in Section 4.B.1(a), a clinical-category Qualifying National Exam means the examination administered by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB):

1. Clinical Examination;

B. Master's-Category Qualifying National Exam: As set forth in Section 4.C.1(a), a master's-category Qualifying National Exam means either of the following examinations administered by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB):

1. Masters Examination; or
2. Advanced Generalist Examination when the Home State certifies that the underlying license authorizes independent, non-clinical social work practice and that the scope of practice is consistent with master's-level practice under the Compact. This verification shall be documented through the Compact's scope of practice submission and confirmed as substantially equivalent under applicable Compact rules.

C. Bachelor's-Category Qualifying National Exam: As set forth in Section 4.D.1(a), a bachelor's-category Qualifying National Exam means the Bachelors Examination administered by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB).

1.2 Home State Certification Authority:

A. For applicants who passed the Advanced Generalist Examination, the Home State shall determine whether the underlying license authorizes clinical practice for purposes of clinical-category multistate licensure. The Home State shall certify that:

1. The license authorizes independent clinical social work practice, including diagnosis, treatment, and therapeutic intervention;
2. The license holder meets all clinical practice requirements under Home State law; and
3. The scope of practice is equivalent to that typically authorized for holders of clinical-category licenses in the Home State.

B. Advanced Generalist Examination holders who do not receive clinical-category certification from their Home State shall be eligible for master's-category multistate licensure, provided they meet all other requirements in Section 4.C of the Compact.

1.3 Home State Obligations:

Each Home State that issues a multistate license under the Social Work Licensure Compact shall certify that the license upon which the multistate authorization is based meets the requirements of Section 4.A of the Compact. The Home State shall affirm that:

- a. The license is active and unencumbered as defined in the Compact;
- b. The license is not provisional, temporary, or limited in a manner that would restrict the scope of practice authorized for the applicable category;
- c. The license authorizes the licensee to engage in independent practice as defined by the laws and regulations of the Home State;
- d. Any supervision requirements have been completed, and the licensee is authorized for independent practice;

e. The applicant has completed both fingerprint-based state and federal criminal background checks as required by Section 4.A.3 of the Compact.

1.4 Legacy License Provisions:

A. As provided in Sections 4.B.1(b), 4.C.1(b), and 4.D.1(b) of the Compact, licensees who were licensed prior to the Home State's requirement for a Qualifying National Exam may be eligible for multistate licensure based on continuous licensure, as determined by the Home State and subject to Commission rules prior to one year from adoption

B. Home States may certify Advanced Generalist Examination holders for clinical-category multistate licensure if:

1. The licensee was issued a license authorizing clinical practice based on the Advanced Generalist Examination prior to one year from adoption;
2. The licensee has maintained continuous, unencumbered licensure; and
3. The Home State certifies that the license authorizes clinical practice equivalent to other clinical-category licenses in that state.

1.5 Interstate Recognition:

A. Member states shall recognize multistate licenses according to the category designated by the Home State under Section 5.C of the Compact, provided the Home State's designation complies with the requirements of Section 4.

B. A multistate license holder may practice social work in any member state within the scope authorized by their multistate license category, subject to the laws and regulations of the state in which the client is located at the time care is rendered as required by Section 4.A.6 of the Compact.

C. Member states may not impose additional examination or competency requirements on multistate license holders beyond those established in this Compact and its rules except as otherwise permitted by Compact § 6 A.

1.6 Substantial-Equivalency Review Procedure:

Any Member State may petition the Commission to recognize a national examination as *substantially equivalent* to the examination named for a licensure category in §§ 1.2–1.4. A petition shall:

- (i) identify the examination and the licensure category for which equivalency is sought;
- (ii) document the examination's tested competencies, pass-point methodology, and psychometric validity and defensibility; and
- (iii) compare those elements to the Commission-approved examination for that category.

The Commission shall publish notice of the petition, allow at least 30 days for public comment, and decide the petition by two-thirds majority vote at a Commission meeting. A finding of substantial equivalency made under this section satisfies Article 4.B(1)(c) or 4.C(1)(c) of the Compact for all Member States.