

MEETING MINUTES

Examination Program Review Committee December 7, 2009

Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel
5711 W. Century Blvd.
Century AB Room
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Committee Members Present:

Elise Froistad, MFT Member, Chair
Renee Lonner, LCSW Member

Staff Present:

Kim Madsen, Acting Executive Officer
Paula Gershon, Program Manager
Sandra Wright, Examination Analyst

Committee Members Not Present

None

Guest List:

Dr. Tracy Montez
Guest list on file

Due to a recording malfunction the meeting was not recorded. Minutes from this meeting are a result of notes committee members and staff took during the meeting.

Elise Froistad, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

I. Introductions

The Examination Program Review Committee (committee) introduced themselves in place of roll. A quorum was established. Staff and audience members also introduced themselves.

II. Purpose of the Committee

Ms. Froistad noted that those in attendance were familiar with the purpose of the committee and dispensed with review of the committee's purpose.

III. Review Approval of the May 4, 2009, and October 5, 2009, Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2009, Minutes

Renee Lonner moved to approve the May 4, 2009 meeting minutes. Elise Froistad seconded. The committee voted unanimously (2-0) to pass the motion.

October 5, 2009, Minutes

Kim Madsen noted a minor correction on page 7.

Renee Lonner moved to approve the October 5, 2009 meeting minutes as amended. Elise Froistad seconded. The committee voted unanimously (2-0) to pass the motion.

IV. Presentation of Examination Process by Dr. Tracy Montez

Dr. Montez briefly reviewed the committee's work to date; citing the process of examination development, item writing, and developing a pass score. Dr. Montez discussed the information currently available to exam candidates as required by the Professional Guidelines and Technical Standards. Specifically, where appropriate, all test takers should be provided in advance, as much information about the test content and purposes.

Dr. Montez noted that the information regarding the board's testing process is currently available to exam candidates on the board's web site as well as in the board's Examination Study Guide publication. The testing information offers suggestions for preparing for an exam as well as sample questions from previous tests that may help a candidate familiarize themselves with the testing format.

Currently, exam candidates take a computer-based test through PSI, an examination testing vendor. Candidates may take the exam at any of the thirteen California sites or at any of the ten sites nationwide. PSI has established security protocols to ensure the integrity of the exam.

Once eligible, candidates may register for their exam via the internet or by phone. Exams are offered six days a week during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except for major holidays. Candidates who require reasonable special accommodations to take the test work with the board staff to secure those accommodations. Candidates sit at a computer terminal to take their test. Each candidate is afforded a practice test prior to the start of their exam. An online survey is offered to candidates at the end of each exam.

V. Review of the Committee's Progress and Objectives by Dr. Tracy Montez

Dr. Montez stated the committee began its work to conduct a holistic review of the board's examination program and evaluate the issues associated with the exam program in December 2008. Through a series of five public meetings, the committee presented information regarding the exam development process, listened to stakeholders concerns and comments, and provided hands on training on the following topics: Occupational analysis, examination development (e.g. item writing and review), exam constructions, and passing scores. Issues unique to each profession were also addressed during these meetings.

As a result of the work of the committee and input from stakeholders, a list of recommendations will be presented to the board for approval.

Dr. Montez presented the first recommendation to implement a revised examination program for the Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the Marriage and Family Therapist licenses. Specifically, a law and ethics test to be given upon graduation and a scenario-based practice examination after supervised hours were obtained. Dr. Montez explained the first test would likely be a two-hour test with a minimum of 50 questions which would include some pretest questions. The second test would incorporate practice based

questions and would be approximately four hours in length with 175 questions including some pretest questions.

Comments from the stakeholders in attendance were specific to the details of implementation of the new testing process. Ms. Madsen responded that many of the details had not yet been worked out. However, the Board will strive to be fair to those candidates currently in the process as well as future exam candidates.

Ms. Madsen commented that revising the current exam structure to the proposed structure would allow for an easier transition to a national exam format if use of the national exam is possible in the future. Additionally, the new structure would reduce a candidate's time in the exam process by six to nine months.

Ms. Froistad expressed a preference for candidates to take the first exam within one year of registration.

Additional comments from the stakeholders indicated support for the proposed concept of revising the exam structure.

Dr. Montez presented the remaining recommendations:

- Collaborate with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) as directed by the Board (see May 29-30, 2008 board meeting minutes) to consider the ASWB examination in its work as it relates to licensure for clinical social work.
- Collaborate with the Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) to jointly perform the Occupational Analysis to be used for the both California MFT licensure exam and national exam.
- Evaluate the feasibility of providing candidates with a practice examination for each profession. At a minimum, revise LCSW, LEP and MFT Examination Study Guide sample questions to represent updated, job-related content as well as question format.
- Conduct a survey of reference materials (e.g., textbooks) used by schools to assist with examination development efforts.
- Evaluate the feasibility of publishing reference lists in the LCSW, LEP and MFT Examination Study Guides.
- Expand subject matter expert recruitment pool.

A comment noting the board previously reviewed the ASWB exam and occupational analysis used for the national exam was received. The stakeholder inquired as to the progress of the board obtaining information regarding the current occupational analysis from ASWB. Ms. Madsen responded that the board anticipated receiving the information in January 2010.

Comments were received from the stakeholders supporting a practice exam available on line to exam candidates. Stakeholders indicated a practice exam would be beneficial to candidates. Further, reference lists would not only benefit exam candidates, but schools as well in terms of preparing candidates.

Stakeholders inquired if current practice trends such as the Mental Health Services Act and cultural diversity are reflected in Subject Matter Experts utilized for exam development. Ms. Madsen responded that the Board is considering several strategies to increase recruitment of Subject Matter Experts so that current practice trends are represented.

A recently licensed individual shared his personal exam experience. The individual noted many of the same concerns previously expressed by others. Specifically, that Clinical Vignette exam appears to test logically thinking as opposed to clinical skills and some questions appear to cross over between categories (e.g. law & ethics).

Renee Lonner moved to present all the Examination Program Review Committee recommendations to the entire board at the January 2010 board meeting. Elise Froistad seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously (2-0) to pass the motion.

Ms. Lonner requested board staff to prepare draft language specific to the proposed exam structure changes. Ms. Madsen responded that the draft language would be available for consideration at the January 2010 meeting.

VII. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

The meeting was adjourned.