



**Board of Behavioral Sciences**  
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## **Examination Restructure FAQs for Non-Registrants**

*(Individuals who do NOT hold a registration  
as an ASW, MFT Intern or PCC Intern)*

### **LCSW, LMFT & LPCC Programs**

**Effective Date: January 1, 2016**

## **OVERVIEW**

Effective January 1, 2016, the Board's examinations for LCSW, LMFT, and LPCC applicants will be changing as follows:

### **NEW LCSW & LMFT EXAMS:**

LCSW and LMFT applicants will be required to pass two new exams that replace the existing exams, as follows. Both are written, multiple choice exams. There are no changes to the LEP or LPCC exam types.

- California Law and Ethics Exam. This exam is designed to assess an applicant's knowledge of and ability to apply legal and ethical standards relating to clinical practice. It will replace the Standard Written Exam.
- Clinical Exam. This exam is designed to assess an applicant's knowledge of psychotherapeutic principles and methods in treatment and their application, and the ability to make judgments about appropriate techniques, methods and objectives as applicable to the profession's scope of practice. It will replace the Clinical Vignette Exam.

### **THE FOLLOWING DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-REGISTRANTS AND IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY:**

- **Registrants Must Take a California Law and Ethics Exam**  
Those who hold an ASW, MFT Intern or PCC Intern registration will be required to take a California Law and Ethics Exam while a registrant.
- **Passing Score Required for Subsequent Registrations**  
Effective January 1, 2017: Applicants will be unable to obtain a subsequent (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>) ASW or intern registration without first passing the Law and Ethics Exam.

Effective January 1, 2016: Applicants will be able to obtain a subsequent registration number without passing the Law and Ethics exam. However, such applicants must **pass the exam prior to the first registration renewal**. The subsequent registration cannot be renewed until the exam has been passed.

If you anticipate needing to apply for a registration while you are in the examination process, see the *Exam Restructure FAQs for Registrants* for more information.

**EXAM RESTRUCTURE FAQs**  
**EXAM CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT**  
**HOLD A REGISTRATION**

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**EXAM RESTRUCTURE FAQs**  
**EXAM CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT**  
**HOLD A REGISTRATION**

**THIS FAQ DOES NOT APPLY TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HOLD  
A REGISTRATION AS AN ASW, MFT INTERN OR PCC INTERN**

**1. Who is considered a “candidate” under the exam restructure?**

A “candidate” is an individual who does NOT hold a current or delinquent renewable ASW, MFT Intern or PCC Intern registration, and whose *Application for Examination Eligibility* (licensure) has been approved. If you are a registrant, please see the *Exam Restructure FAQs for Registrants*.

**2. What if I am a LCSW or LMFT candidate who has already been approved to take the Standard Written Exam?**

The LCSW and LMFT Standard Written exams will no longer be available as of January 1, 2016. If you do not pass the exam before that time, you will be required to take the new Law and Ethics Exam.

**3. What happens if I pass the Standard Written Exam by January 1, 2016?**

If you have already passed the LCSW or LMFT Standard Written, then you will have fulfilled the new Law and Ethics Exam requirement, unless your Standard Written Exam score is more than seven (7) years old.

**4. Are the LPCC or LEP exams changing?**

No. The LPCC program will continue to require a California Law and Ethics exam and the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam. The LEP program will continue to require the LEP Written Exam.

**5. What if a candidate has already passed the LPCC California Law and Ethics Exam?**

A candidate who has already passed this exam will have fulfilled the new Law and Ethics Exam requirement.

**6. What happens if a candidate does not pass the Law and Ethics Exam?**

You may retake the exam after at least 90 days have passed from the date you last took the exam.

**EXAM RESTRUCTURE FAQs**  
**EXAM CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT**  
**HOLD A REGISTRATION**

**7. Is there a required waiting period between retakes?**

Yes, there is a 90-day waiting period.

**8. Am I required to take a course on Law and Ethics if I don't pass the exam?**

No. This requirement only pertains to registered ASWs, MFT Interns and PCC Interns.

**9. Will candidates be required to take a second exam after passing the Law and Ethics Exam?**

Yes, applicants will be required to take and pass either a California clinical or national clinical exam, as defined below:

LMFT: California Clinical Exam

LCSW: Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical Exam

LPCC: National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE)

**10. I have already been approved to take the LCSW or LMFT Clinical Vignette Exam. What happens if I don't pass this exam by January 1, 2016?**

The Clinical Vignette Exam will no longer be available as of January 1, 2016. If you do not pass the exam by that time, you will be required to take the new California Clinical or national clinical exam as indicated below:

LMFT: California Clinical exam

LCSW: Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical exam

**11. What happens if I passed the LMFT or LCSW Standard Written Exam more than seven (7) years ago and have yet to pass the Clinical Vignette Exam?**

Once your passing score on the Standard Written Exam reaches seven (7) or more years old, you will be required to retake the Standard Written (if prior to January 1, 2016) or to take the new Law and Ethics Exam, in addition to the new California clinical or national clinical exam.

**12. What happens if I pass the LMFT or LCSW Clinical Vignette Exam by January 1, 2016? Will I still have to take the new California Clinical or national clinical exam?**

If you have passed the Clinical Vignette Exam, you are not required to take the new California Clinical or national clinical exam.

**EXAM RESTRUCTURE FAQs**  
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**13. Why isn't California using a national MFT clinical exam?**

The Board has been working with the national Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) regarding the viability of using its exam for LMFT licensure in California in the future. For updates on this and other Board activity, sign up for our [email Subscriber's list](#).

**14. How are the new LMFT and LCSW Clinical exams different from the Clinical Vignette exams?**

The clinical vignette exams and the new clinical exams are both designed to be directly related to clinical practice situations. Both types of exams require the ability to integrate and apply professional knowledge and skills.

A clinical vignette exam contains a series of multiple choice items related to a single vignette, and typically consists of 5 to 7 vignettes with 4 to 7 multiple-choice questions associated with each vignette, for a total of 30 multiple-choice questions administered over a 2-hour period. A clinical vignette exam item is longer and can be more complex than a standard multiple choice item.

The new clinical exams will consist of standard multiple choice items, and will continue to include items based on vignettes, though each item will stand alone.

As of January 1, 2016, the new clinical exams will be as follows:

LCSW APPLICANTS

[ASWB Clinical Exam](#) - this is a 170-item multiple choice exam administered over a period of four hours.

LMFT APPLICANTS

*California Clinical Exam* - This exam is currently in development, and will be designed to evaluate candidate knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following content areas:

Crisis Management, Clinical Evaluation, Treatment Planning, Treatment, and Law and Ethics

These are the same content areas upon which the Clinical Vignette Exam is currently based. The Clinical exam will consist of 170 multiple-choice items administered over a four-hour period.