



Board of Behavioral Sciences



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Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
Department of Consumer Affairs

Notice to Students – Samuel Merritt University School Accreditation Status

This notice is to inform current and prospective graduates of Samuel Merritt University of the institution's current accreditation status and how this status may affect eligibility for registration and licensure in California.

California law requires all LCSW applicants to obtain their degree from a school of social work accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The law further provides that an applicant who holds a master's degree from a school or department of social work that is in candidacy for CSWE accreditation may register as an Associate and gain supervised experience toward licensure. However, these applicants will not be eligible to become licensed until the school or department of social work achieves full CSWE accreditation (Business and Professions Code §§ 4991.2, 4996.2, and 4996.18).

In 2023, Samuel Merritt University entered into candidacy with the CSWE Commission on Accreditation and has four years to obtain full accreditation.

Based on its candidacy status, graduates of Samuel Merritt University may register as Associates and begin earning supervised experience toward licensure. These Associates may also sit for the California Law and Ethics Exam, as taking the exam is required for registration renewal. However, they will not be eligible to sit for the ASWB Clinical Exam—and therefore will not be eligible for licensure—until Samuel Merritt University becomes fully accredited.

If Samuel Merritt University does not achieve full accreditation by June of 2027, future applicants will not be eligible to obtain a registration. Additionally, Associates who registered under degrees issued while the school was in candidacy will be disqualified from licensure based on that degree, and any supervised experience hours earned under those registrations will not be accepted by the Board. Their only alternative will be to obtain a qualifying degree from a fully accredited institution and apply for a new registration.

We strongly encourage all current and prospective students to remain informed of Samuel Merritt University's progress toward full accreditation and to consider how the institution's status may affect their long-term professional goals. The Board remains committed to transparency and will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.