



# The Association of Social Work Boards

## **Mission**

Provide support and services to the social work regulatory community to advance safe, competent, and ethical practices to strengthen public protection.

## **Accountability**

# Today's Goal

Share an overview of:

1. **accurate** information about the exam development process including anti-bias measures, and
2. ASWB's upstream, solution-focused approach to collaborating across the profession on addressing disparate **outcomes**

## Licensure requirements



# Social Work as a Profession

**A Profession** is a type of job that requires special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of applied competence in practice.

**A Professional** is one engaged in and qualified for a particular profession with compensation commensurate with their specialized training, education and practice competence.

**Professional Regulation** protects the public by verifying minimum competency, investigating complaints, and upholding professional compliance with state law and regulations.

# Why measure competency using an exam?

Essential to the regulatory duty to “verify minimum competency”

Objective component of licensing decisions

Continuously vetted threshold of entry-to-practice level competence

# The ASWB exam is

## DEFENSIBLE

The exams meet testing industry standards and can be defended if challenged.

## RELIABLE

Similarly situated test-takers achieve similar scores.

## VALID

The exam measures what was intended, as defined by the **practice analysis**.

ASWB meets and exceeds  
testing industry standards  
for creating high-stakes  
licensing exams

**Psychometric measurement**

**+**

**Social work subject  
matter expertise**

# How are the exams developed?

## Personnel

 Staff: 20 (4 exam development, 16 exam administration)

 Vendors: 4

 Item development consultants: 7

 Volunteers: 65

 Item writers: 90

Total people involved in the program:

# almost 200







Exam program yearbook

ASWB item writers are **licensed social workers**, selected for demographic, geographic, and practice setting diversity.

# About the exam

170 items (questions) · 150 scored, 20 pretest

Four-option multiple choice (three-option questions coming in January) · Four-hour time limit

Universal passing score

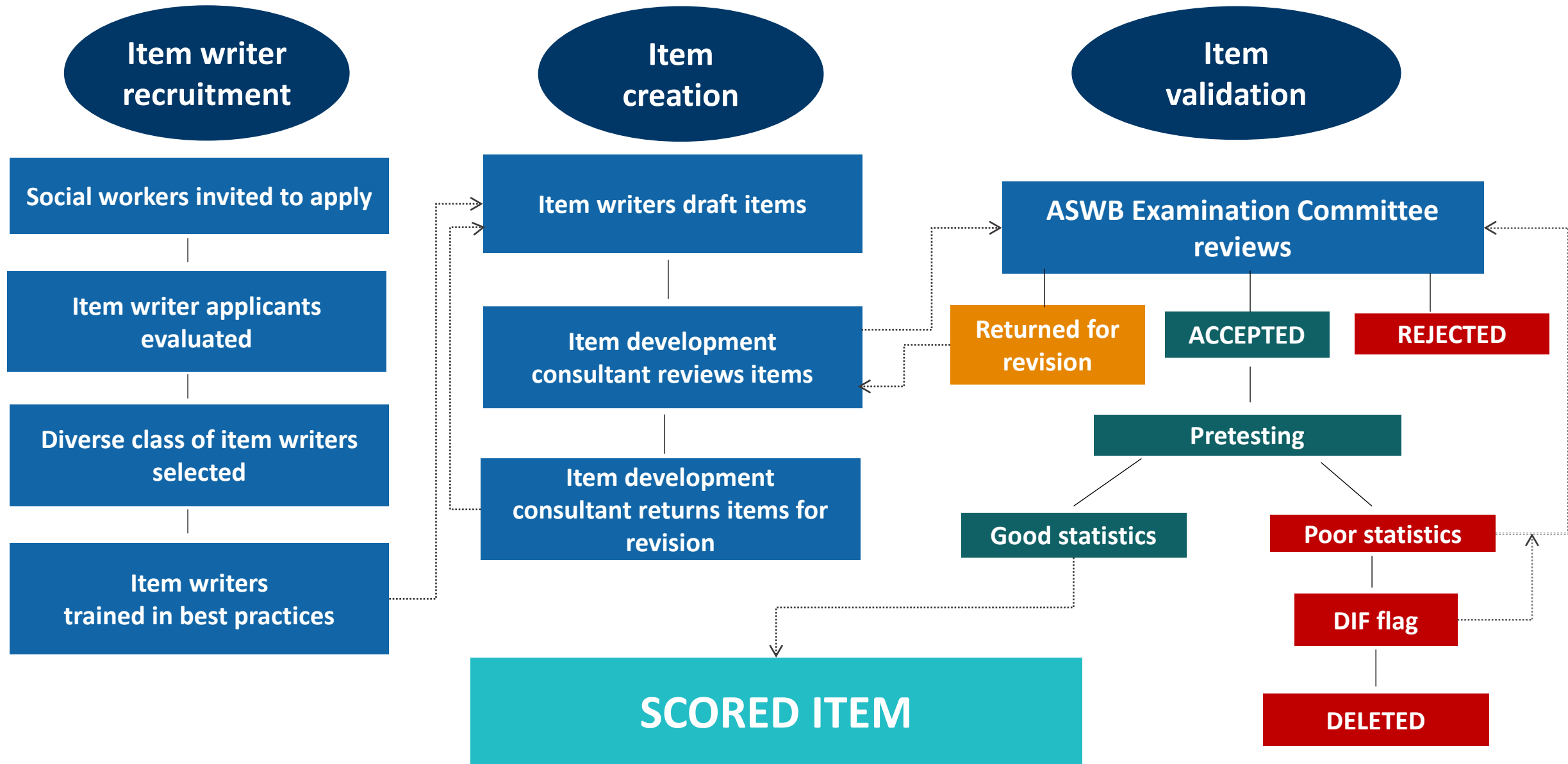
Items randomly administered

Multiple forms online · Rotated quarterly

Computer-delivered at 300+ Pearson VUE centers in the United States and Canada

Standardized administration under equal conditions

# ASWB's examination item development process



# Pipelines

Why aren't there more ballerinas of Color?

Don't ask at the audition... get them in schools



# Licensure Requirements

**Education**

+

**Exam**  
(entry-level)

+

**Experience**  
(if required)

+

**Moral Character**

=

**Public protection and accountability through licensure**

Expand the diversity of voices contributing to the development of the practice analysis and the examinations

Identify participants and questions for community conversations to ensure a variety of perspectives are heard

Provide education on exam development and pass rate data

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Meetings: April and August, 2022



# SOCIAL WORK Census



**Data release  
to schools**



**ASWB Exam  
Guidebook**

**Free exam  
resources for  
educators**



**Educator Guide to the  
Social Work Exams**

with group review  
practice questions

**Educator  
training**



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Released August  
2022




*Micro to Macro Voices  
Welcomed!*

# Community conversations



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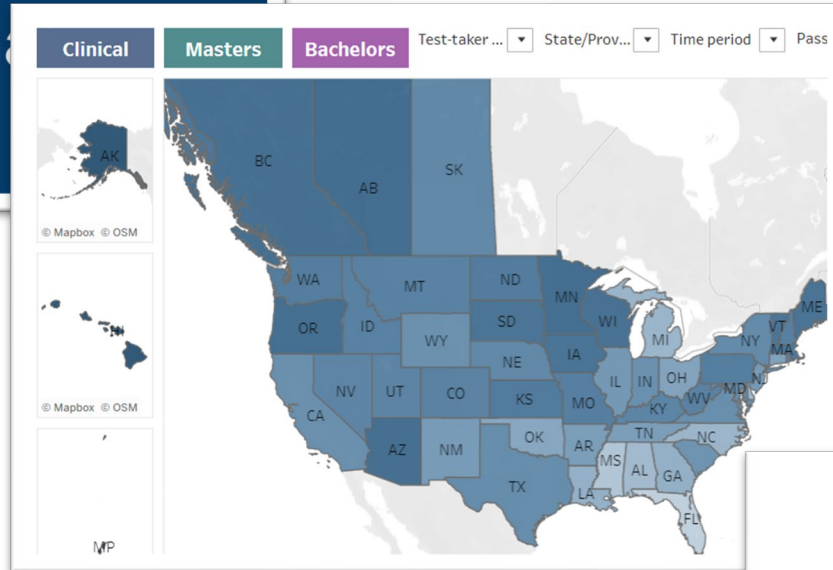


**ASWB**  
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# 2022 ASWB Exam Pass Rate Analysis

FINAL REPORT

2



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**ASWB**  
Association of Social Work Boards

## ASWB social work licensing exam report for social work schools and programs

**School:** University of California at Los Angeles  
**Date:** August 2022

The following tables show the performance of test-takers who reported graduation from this school on the ASWB social work licensing exams taken in 2021. Some data for the current exam blueprint, which went online at the beginning of 2018, are also included. For comparison, ASWB has supplied data on test-takers approved to take the exam in the state or province where this school is located and all test-takers in the United States and Canada.

# Nevada's data

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## Clinical exam

First-time test-takers, 2011-2021  
N=779 (Black test-takers, N=79)

Nevada first-time pass rate: **81.0%**

Overall test-takers, 2011-2021  
N=798 (Black test-takers, N=84)

Nevada eventual pass rate: **93.1%**

## Masters exam

First-time test-takers, 2011-2021  
N=1,760 (Black test-takers, N=254)

Nevada first-time pass rate: **80.7%**

Overall test-takers, 2011-2021  
N= 1,787 (Black test-takers, N=268)

Nevada eventual pass rate: **87.2%**

## Bachelors exam

First-time test-takers, 2011-2021  
N=884 (Black test-takers, N=100)

Nevada first-time pass rate: **78.8%**

Overall test-takers, 2011-2021  
N=859 (Black test-takers, N=103)

Nevada eventual pass rate: **85.7%**

# University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Table 2. 2018-2021 pass rates for test-takers reporting graduation from this school compared to state/province and United States/Canada pass rates

Exam and test-taker group	N of test-takers who listed this school	Percent passing: This school	Percent passing: State/province	Percent passing: United States/Canada
<b>Bachelors</b>				
First-time	97	57.7	66.0	68.4
Eventual	102	66.7	73.0	72.5
<b>Masters</b>				
First-time	297	74.4	79.0	74.3
Eventual	316	81.3	85.0	78.9
<b>Clinical</b>				
First-time	230	77.4	80.0	74.6
Eventual	237	87.3	90.0	82.4

**Note.** *First-time* includes only those test-takers who took an exam for the first time during the 2018-2021 period. *Eventual* includes all test-takers, both repeat and first-time, who tested during the 2018-2021 period and reflects test-takers' most recent attempt during that period.

# University of Nevada, Reno

Table 2. 2018-2021 pass rates for test-takers reporting graduation from this school compared to state/province and United States/Canada pass rates

Exam and test-taker group	N of test-takers who listed this school	Percent passing: This school	Percent passing: State/province	Percent passing: United States/Canada
<b>Bachelors</b>				
First-time	116	74.1	66.0	68.4
Eventual	123	79.7	73.0	72.5
<b>Masters</b>				
First-time	372	83.3	79.0	74.3
Eventual	374	88.8	85.0	78.9
<b>Clinical</b>				
First-time	158	83.5	80.0	74.6
Eventual	159	93.1	90.0	82.4

**Note.** *First-time* includes only those test-takers who took an exam for the first time during the 2018-2021 period. *Eventual* includes all test-takers, both repeat and first-time, who tested during the 2018-2021 period and reflects test-takers' most recent attempt during that period.

# Common Questions

- Why is disaggregated data being published now?
- What are the exam ramifications on the social work profession?
- Will the test be developed in other languages?
- What impact does all of this have on the multi-state compact efforts?
- What can the broader social work community do?

# ...and YOU!

- Encourage social workers to participate in ASWB initiatives
- Question the sound bites and so-called “facts” presented in the absence of evidence or depth
- Support future research aimed at answering the questions raised by the 2022 descriptive data (baseline)
- Continue to use us, your member association, as a resource

**Thank you!**