

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Worker's Entry to Practice Exam

Information Session

April 7th, 2026, 12pm – 1pm

Speakers:

Sarah Choudry

Haley Shanoff

Loredana Turcu

Anna Jeremian

NOTE: Information listed here was as close to what was said as possible, without interpretation or additions.

- More information is to come, this was an inaugural information session
 - Many details are still being worked out
- Why create an exam?
 - Additional tool to assess readiness
 - Exam is considered best practice across health professions (when combined with educational qualifications) in Ontario
 - Employer oversight was a protection for a long time, but as way more registrants go into private practice there's less oversight, especially for psychotherapy, for those folks, so this is a guardrail
- It is a technical and legal requirement to use a ASWB exam
- Q1 2027: Online practice test ready for English practice SW exam
- Q3 2027: SSW and French exams and resources ready
- Phased approach:
 - Fall 2027 – equivalency stream and reinstatement or reapplication streams will take the exam
 - Fall 2028 – all applicants start the exam (those who convocate in Fall 2028)
- The goal is to allow a full academic year of prep before students have to write the exam
 - May not be available for all programs, but will hopefully be a small subset
- 3000 – 4000 people apply to become social workers in Ontario each year
- To register with the college, your degree must be conferred
 - So if you finish April 30, but you convocate September 15, you can't apply to register until September 15
 - Students and educators are encouraged to advocate to changes to wording at the institutional level
 - This....could? be updated?
- Wording on convocation has included
 - “degree conferred” and date and credential
- Student sessions will come out Fall 2026 re: the exam
- Re: systemically discriminated groups that failed the exam more often:
 - ASWB is trying new things than for any other exams
 - Larger census of social workers used

- Got more diversified test takes
- Trying to pilot and experiment with taking the exam at your college or university, right now it would be a Pearson Vue (sp?) location
 - These centres also administer exams for occupational therapy and nursing, for example
 - Piloting remote proctoring but various folks are recommending against this because AI
 - But even in the North and remote areas they are piloting testing centres there too
 - All testing centres will have technical infrastructure (computers)
 - Currently there are 9 approved sites for Pearson Vue
- A lot of educators in the chat called on The College to address how the exam intersects with Truth/Reconciliation, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and Decolonized Approaches to social work
- The College cannot offer financial aid to pay fees for exam
- If you have an SSW and get your BSW/MSW, you do have to write the new exam
- But, if you have your BSW, and then get your MSW, you do not have to write the new exam
- Canadian cost is still being finalized,
 - but in BC they are paying in USD, currently \$230 USD
 - with our exam there will become one universal Canadian cost
 - they think it will be the same cost
- The exam does not, and does not have to, assess everything (for example, they may not include ethics and laws) because they lean on schools as part of the assessment
 - Education qualification level refers to training and screening as key tools of colleges and universities
- Professional judgement and decision making skills is the key skill being assessed
- It will be all multiple choice, so yes like even counselling skills
- Scores would be available “very quickly” after the exam
- Students will pay
 - Application fee
 - Exam fee
 - Registration fee
- ASWB does not recommend anyone, ever, use additional exam resources
 - Only the practice test is provided, but at a cost
- Schools in BC often purchase a practice test and then give it to students for free
- The College is looking to accept results from other provinces that use an ASWB exam when they are also registered, so they would not have to retake the exam
- Pass/Fail/Retake data would be available on the ASWB site
 - It is subject to when they publish it
- There will be educator sessions regarding the exam a couple times a year

It was observed the speakers ignored and skipped over questions about Indigenous issues, systemic discrimination and contextual questions.

Contact details:

Questions about exams: communications@ocswssw.org

Questions about application process: registration@ocswssw.org

Exam updates: www.ocswssw.org/applicants/entry-to-practice-exams