



## Competence Program Accommodation and Exception Policy

### Purpose

This policy outlines the process by which registrants of ACSW may request accommodation, extension, exception, or waiver related to continuing competence requirements. The goal is to ensure equity, uphold professional standards, and maintain public trust.

### Scope

This policy applies to all ACSW registrants, including those on the general or provisional registers or those with inactive registration status, who request accommodation, extension, exception, or waiver to the Competence Program requirements due to one of the following:

- Documented disabilities
- Protected grounds under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*
- Temporary or ongoing health conditions or extraordinary circumstances (e.g., illness, injury, bereavement, displacement, significant life event or unexpected personal circumstances)

### Guiding Principles

- **Equity and Inclusion:** ACSW is committed to removing barriers to participation while maintaining professional standards.
- **Proportionate:** Requests will be assessed and decisions made in a manner that is reasonable, balanced, and responsive to the registrant’s circumstances, while maintaining professional standards and public protection.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Decisions will be documented, communicated clearly, and subject to review.

## Types of Accommodations and Exceptions

Type	Description	Duration
Accommodation	Modification to meet individual needs (e.g., disability, religious observance)	Ongoing or time-limited
Extension	Additional time to meet the competence requirements. This type of consideration does not adjust the number of hours required.	Time limited Max 3 months May be extended once after which

		registrant should submit a request for an exception
Exception	Approved release from completing competence requirements for a period, and/or the type of hours activities completed (e.g. continuing education or professional engagement)	Time-limited, annual update required
Waiver	Full release from competence requirements	Ongoing

Eligibility Criteria

Approval is granted based on demonstrated functional impact on competence requirements—not solely on diagnosis or circumstance.

To be considered, the registrant must:

- Demonstrate that the request is necessary and reasonable, based on documented barriers, protected grounds under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, or extraordinary circumstances
- Be willing to collaborate with the College to identify appropriate modifications, timelines or alternative approaches that uphold professional standards and public protection.
- Accept and comply with any conditions or expectations specified in the approval to support continued competence and regulatory compliance.

Ineligibility

- Practising outside the scope of social work practice will not be considered an acceptable reason for an exception to continuing competence requirements.

Application and Review Process

Submission

Registrants seeking an accommodation, extension, exception, or waiver must:

- Submit a completed request on the ACSW Accommodation and Exception form to [competence@acsw.ab.ca](mailto:competence@acsw.ab.ca).
- Provide sufficient information to allow assessment against the eligibility criteria, including an explanation of why the request is necessary and reasonable. Registrants should ensure that the request describes the functional impact. See step 3 in the policy for additional information.
- Participate in discussions with the College, as needed, to identify appropriate modifications, timelines, or alternative approaches that maintain professional standards and protect the public.
- Acknowledge and agree to any conditions or monitoring that may be imposed as part of an approved decision.

Review Process:

**Step 1: Completeness check**

- All required sections completed
- Reason for request clearly stated
- Timeframe specified
- Request type is described

If there are major gaps, return to registrant for completion

**Step 2: Reason for request is identified**

- Medical/health-based (e.g. illness, injury, disability)
- Crisis/contextual based (e.g. evacuation, natural disaster, family crisis)

**Step 3: Demonstrated Impact**

<b>Medical/Health Based Requests</b>	<b>Crisis/Contextual Requests</b>
<p>Registrant must demonstrate how their condition affects ability to complete competence requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cognitive limitations (focus, memory, decision-making)</li> <li>○ Physical limitations (mobility, fatigue, dexterity)</li> <li>○ Emotional/psychological impact affecting engagement</li> <li>○ Time constraints directly tied to condition/leave</li> <li>○ Inability to complete specific competence activities</li> </ul>	<p>Registrant must clearly demonstrate how their circumstance affects ability to complete competence requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Loss of time/capacity (e.g., relocation, recovery tasks)</li> <li>○ Loss of access (internet, workspace, stability)</li> <li>○ Competing urgent responsibilities (family, housing, safety)</li> <li>○ Inability to complete specific CP activities</li> <li>○ Cognitive limitations (focus, memory, decision-making)</li> <li>○ Emotional/psychological impact affecting engagement</li> </ul>
<p>Link to Competence Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clear connection between impairment and inability to complete requirements</li> <li>○ Program requirements affected are identified (self-assessment, learning plan, activities, hours, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Link to Competence Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clear connection between circumstance and inability to complete requirements</li> <li>○ Program requirements affected are identified (self-assessment, learning plan, activities, hours, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>Supporting information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal statement</li> <li>○ Supporting information if applicable</li> <li>○ Duration and prognosis (temporary vs ongoing)</li> </ul>	<p>Supporting information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal statement</li> <li>○ Clearly time-limited</li> </ul>
<p>Alternative Plan</p>	<p>Alternative Plan</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can the registrant reasonably participate in the Competence Program</li> <li>○ Reasonable and proportionate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can the registrant reasonably participate in the Competence Program</li> <li>○ Reasonable and proportionate</li> </ul>
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**Step 4: Decision**

- Approved
- Modify
- Request additional information
- Denied

**Step 5: Communicate decision to registrant**

Requests are reviewed by the Professional Practice Administrative Support Professional for completeness and returned for completion if required. Completed submissions are reviewed by the Director of Professional Practice or designated staff.

Reviews may include a review of the registrant’s participation in the Competence Program, consultation with the registrant, legal, and/or Executive Director and Registrar.

**1. Decision:**

- Registrant receives written notification of the decision within 10 business days of receipt.
- If approved, terms and duration will be specified.
- If denied, rationale will be provided and appeal options outlined.

**2. Review of a Decision:**

- A registrant may request a review of the decision by the Executive Director and Registrar by email at [competence@acsw.ab.ca](mailto:competence@acsw.ab.ca)
- A written decision will be provided within 30 business days. If approved the decision will outline any change to the requirements for the registrant and any associated timelines. Decisions may include accommodation(s), deferral, exception and/or waiver of requirements.

**3. Appeal:**

- Registrants may appeal decisions through the ACSW Appeals Committee within 30 calendar days of notification of the review of the decision.
- Appeals after this timeline will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Executive Director.

### Confidentiality

All requests and related documentation will be handled in accordance with ACSW's privacy policies and applicable legislation.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Approved requests are subject to review as identified in the decision matrix to ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness.

Registrants will notify the ACSW if there are changes in their registration status, or circumstances that necessitated the request.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed minimally every three years or as required by changes in legislation or regulatory standards.

## Definitions

- **ACCOMMODATION:** A modification or support provided to a registrant to enable participation in the Competence Program (CP). Accommodation is designed to address barriers related to disability, protected human rights grounds, or other documented needs, without compromising public safety or professional standards.  
*Example: A social worker requests assistive technology or additional time to complete an on-line assessment; they are required to do as part of the competence program.*
- **EXTENSION:** A temporary postponement of the competence program deadline(s), granted upon request due to documented personal, medical, or professional circumstances. Deferrals are time-limited and subject to review, and do not exempt the registrant from completing the 40 required hours.  
*Example: a social worker requests an extension of their competence requirements due to evacuation or an unexpected health event. They are granted a one-month extension but still must complete the 40 hours.*
- **EXCEPTION:** An approved release from participating in all or some of the competence program requirements, granted under specific conditions where compliance is not feasible or reasonable. Exceptions may be conditional and are assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure continued competence and public protection.  
*Example: A social worker requests an exception from completing the wellness worksheet and in lieu provides another tool used at their place of employment, or a social worker requests an exception from participating in the program because they are unwell, experience a disability or a life circumstance that prevents them from completing the requirements.*
- **WAIVER:** A complete release from participation in the competence program, typically granted in rare or exceptional circumstances. Waivers are considered only when the requirement is deemed unnecessary, unduly burdensome, or incompatible with the social worker's practice context, and must be justified through documented evidence.  
*Example: a social worker who has end stage cancer diagnosis and is volunteering to facilitate a group for other people experiencing the same illness and diagnosis, requests a waiver of continuing competence requirements. Another example is a social worker who retains registration on the ACSW general register but resides in another province and is registered in that home province.*