

# *Accredited Clinical Social Worker (ACSW)*

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **Why should I become accredited?**

There are many benefits from becoming accredited, including:

- Credentials are a symbol of quality and established competency
- Credentials are a sector indicator of achieved experience and capability
- Your Distinction – a credential establishes that you have achieved recognition in your field of practice
- Commitment to ongoing excellence – the credential demonstrates the currency of your skills and knowledge by setting a high standard of continuing professional development that validates your commitment to excellence
- A formalised community of practice and network of peers – through sharing of knowledge and experiences and delivering on best practice
- Continuing professional development opportunities – access to targeted training and development to support your professional development goals
- Peer and professional recognition – improved employment and leadership opportunities.

### **Why have we introduced the ‘Your Distinction’ credentialing program?**

The development of credentials has been in train since 2016, and are articulated in the AASW’s Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 <https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/10728>. The Strategic Plan has been developed across the Association, this sets our direction and agenda for the next four years, it prioritises promotion and advocacy for the profession of social work and AASW members, upholding standards for regulation of the profession, social justice and building the professional capacity of our members.

The program increases opportunities for members to gain recognition for specialised social work practice in a range of areas. The credential assures clients and their families, the Australian community, employers and funding bodies that accredited social workers have acquired a distinguished level of expertise in their field of practice and are committed to their ongoing professional development.

### **Why have we introduced the Accredited Clinical Social Worker (ACSW) credential?**

Our 2018 Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey resulted in overwhelming support for the credentials including 1,057 members who identified specifically the need for the development of a Clinical Social Worker credential. The benefits of becoming an ACSW are outlined on our website <https://www.aasw.asn.au/membership-information/accredited-clinical-social-worker-acsw>

### **What is the difference between an Accredited Mental Health Accredited Social Worker (AMHSW) and an Accredited Clinical Social Worker?**

The clinical social work credential recognises advanced direct practice in a diverse range of practice settings. It recognises a breadth of practice and is broader than mental health. This is further outlined in the clinical social work

practice settings section in the [Criteria for AASW Accredited Clinical Social Worker](#).

### **Can I provide services under Medicare if I am an ACSW?**

No, to provide services through Medicare Australia you will need be accredited as an AMHSW.

### **Does this new credential effect my Accredited Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) status?**

No, this will have no effect on your AMHSW status. If you choose to apply to become an ACSW then AASW has created an abridged application process and reduced fee to enable you an easier pathway to obtaining this additional credential.

### **Can I apply for multiple credentials?**

Yes, social workers who meet the eligibility criteria for multiple AASW credentials are encouraged to apply for each that will benefit your work. We have structured the cost of annual accreditation fees so that they reduce with each credential that you obtain.

### **What is the cost associated with applying for the credentials?**

Please refer to the AASW website for details on [fee structure](#).

If you are an existing AMHSW or member of the Clinical Division of the Australian College of Social Workers, then a different fee structure applies. Please refer to the fee section of your application form.

### **What does this mean if I am a current member of the Clinical Division of the Australian College of Social Work?**

Social workers who are members of the Clinical Division of the Australian College of Social Work can apply for the AASW Accredited Clinical Social Work credential via an abridged application process, with no application fee or annual accreditation fee until FY 2020-2021.

As a member of the Clinical Division of the Australian College of Social Work you can continue to use the term clinical social worker, however we are encouraging members, to take up the opportunity to obtain the clinical social work credential.

Our social work profession holds itself to a high standard of clinical expertise and commits to ongoing professional learning. When the Australian College of Social Worker and subsequent Clinical Division was established there was no specific competency-based assessment or any requirement to demonstrate continual knowledge building, as is the case with other credentials such as the AMHSW credential or in alignment with other professional expectations. The AASW believes social workers are very committed to demonstrating our professional expertise. We believe the profession and individuals can demonstrate our clinical skills and provide you with an opportunity to take up the Accredited Clinical Social Worker credential.

### **How was the Capability Framework for the AASW Accredited Clinical Social Worker developed?**

The AASW have worked closely with The National Clinical Social Work Expert Advisory Group to develop the Capability Framework. Members of the expert advisory group were experienced social workers engaged in clinical settings in public, government, non-government and academic capacities. Consultation was conducted with members and external stakeholders.

## Why do I have to complete my assessment in an exam environment?

It is important that your competency assessment has the appropriate rigor so that clients, carers, the community, employers and other professions can confidently place trust in the credentialing process and credential holder.

Therefore, as part of the application process you will be required to complete a case study-based assessment to demonstrate your breadth of clinical knowledge. This will be conducted at a date and time of your choice which can be during working hours or on the weekend/outside of normal work hours.

You will need to nominate an invigilator who can supervise you for the duration of the exam. Your invigilator cannot be a family member, spouse/partner Accredited Clinical Social Worker and cannot report directly to you. Your invigilator will need to complete a declaration that appropriate exam conditions have been met.