§ 7710. Mandatory continuing education. 1. (a) Each licensed master social worker or licensed clinical social worker required under this article to register triennially with the department to practice in this state, shall comply with the provisions of mandatory continuing education requirements prescribed in subdivision two of this section, except as set forth in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subdivision. Licensed master social workers or licensed clinical social workers who do not satisfy the mandatory continuing education requirements shall not practice until they have met such requirements and they have been issued a registration certificate, except that a licensed master social worker or licensed clinical social worker may practice without having met such requirements if he or she is issued a conditional registration certificate pursuant to subdivision three of this section.

(b) Each licensed master social worker or licensed clinical social worker shall be exempt from the mandatory continuing education requirements for the triennial registration period during which they are first licensed. In accordance with the intent of this section, adjustment to the mandatory continuing education requirement may be granted by the department for reasons of health that are certified by an appropriate health care professional, for extended active duty with the armed forces of the United States, or for other good cause acceptable to the department which may prevent compliance.

(c) A licensed master social worker or a licensed clinical social worker not engaged in practice, as determined by the department, shall be exempt from the mandatory continuing education requirement upon the filing of a statement with the department declaring such status. Any licensee who returns to the practice of social work during the triennial registration period shall notify the department prior to reentering the profession and shall meet such mandatory education requirements as shall be prescribed by regulations of the commissioner.

(d) A licensed clinical social worker who is also licensed and registered to practice as a licensed master social worker in the same triennial registration period, shall not be required to complete more than thirty-six hours of continuing education in the triennial registration period, or one hour per month for a registration period other than thirty-six months.

2. During each triennial registration period an applicant for registration as a licensed master social worker or licensed clinical social worker shall complete a minimum of thirty-six hours of acceptable formal continuing education. Any licensed master social worker or licensed clinical social worker whose first registration date following the effective date of this section occurs less than three years from such effective date, but on or after January first, two thousand fifteen, shall complete continuing education hours on a prorated basis at the rate of one hour per month for the period beginning January first, two thousand fifteen up to the first registration date thereafter. A licensee who has not satisfied the mandatory continuing education requirement shall not be issued a triennial registration certificate by the department and shall not practice unless and until a conditional registration is issued as provided for in subdivision three of this section. Continuing education hours taken during one triennium may not be transferred to the subsequent triennium.

3. (a) The department, in its discretion, may issue a conditional registration to a licensee who fails to meet the continuing education requirements established in subdivision two of this section but who agrees to make up any deficiencies and complete any additional education which the department may require. The fee for such a conditional registration shall be the same as, and in addition to, the fee for the triennial registration. The duration of such conditional registration shall be determined by the department but shall not exceed one year. Any licensee who is notified of the denial of registration for failure to submit evidence, satisfactory to the department, of required continuing education and who practices without such registration may be subject to disciplinary proceedings pursuant to section sixty-five hundred ten of this title.

(b) For purposes of this section "acceptable formal education" shall mean formal courses of learning which contribute to professional practice in social work and which meet the standards prescribed by regulations of the commissioner. Such formal courses of learning shall include, but not be limited to, collegiate level credit and non-credit courses, professional development programs and technical sessions offered by national, state and local professional associations and other

organizations acceptable to the department, and any other organized educational and technical programs acceptable to the department. Continuing education courses must be taken from a provider who has been approved by the department, based upon an application and fee, pursuant to the regulations of the commissioner. The department may, in its discretion and as needed to contribute to the health and welfare of the public, require the completion of continuing education courses in specific subjects to fulfill this mandatory continuing education requirement. Licensed master social workers or licensed clinical social workers shall maintain adequate documentation of completion of acceptable formal continuing education and shall provide such documentation at the request of the department. Failure to provide such documentation upon the request of the department shall be an act of misconduct subject to disciplinary proceedings pursuant to section sixty-five hundred ten of this title.

(c) The mandatory continuing education fee shall be determined by the department. Such fee shall be payable on or before the first day of each triennial registration period, and shall be paid in addition to the triennial registration fee required by paragraph (g) of subdivision one and paragraph (g) of subdivision two of section seventy-seven hundred four of this article.