MEET THE ACCREDITATION TEAM

- Programs work with the Director until their candidacy application is approved
- Then each program is randomly assigned to an accreditation specialist
- Co-located programs are typically assigned to the same specialist
- The specialist is the liaison between the Commission on Accreditation (COA) and the programs
- Each specialist collaborates with about 180 programs
Framework for Accreditation
Framework for Accreditation

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve.

The purposes of accreditation are:

- quality assurance
- academic improvement
- public accountability
Framework for Accreditation

The process expands beyond quality control. Accreditation is a developmental, reflective, and renewal process by which program stakeholders craft excellent educational experiences to prepare competent social work practitioners. While accreditation is reviewed at periodic intervals, programs are expected to maintain compliance between review cycles.

Accreditation can be an impetus for:

- Innovation
- Experimentation
- Improvement
Framework for Accreditation

Regional Accreditors: Accredits institutions
  • CHEA Directories: https://www.chea.org/directories

Programmatic Accreditor: CSWE’s Commission on Accreditation (COA) accredits baccalaureate and master’s social work programs
Framework for Accreditation

The Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in the United States and its territories.

The professional judgements of the COA are based on the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) developed by the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and the COA.
Who are the Commission on Accreditation (COA)?

- Volunteers
- **Peers**: full- or part-time social work faculty member at a CSWE-accredited social work program
- Public member
- A minimum of 5 years teaching and/or practice experience
- A minimum 3 years site visit experience
- Reflect the geographic representation of the CSWE membership
- Represent a variety of program attributes (level, size, etc.)
- Maintain active CSWE membership
- Appointed for 3-year terms by the chair of the CSWE Board of Directors
Framework for Accreditation

• Accreditation is a peer-review process, accomplished via dedicated volunteer contributions of COA members and site visitors.
• The DOSWA staff liaise between the COA and the program, providing services, education and training opportunities, accreditation policies and procedures, and furnishing COA decision letters to programs.
• The COA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance.
• Social work programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the 2015 EPAS.
Framework for Accreditation

EPAS Development Process:

• COA and COEP are responsible for revising the EPAS at periodic intervals not to exceed 7 years
• Requirement by CHEA (CSWE’s recognizer)
• 2015 EPAS involved a 5-year process with 3 drafts issued for public review and comment
• Next set of EPAS will be released in 2022
  o Current progress: environmental scan, drafting, and feedback from programs, members, and the public.
• More information on 2022 EPAS published and regularly updated
Practice Doctoral Program Accreditation

- **Since 2010**, there have been many groups and activities examining the role of the practice doctorate in social work and its implications for the social work profession.
- **March 2016**: CSWE Board of Directors voted for the Commissions on Educational Policy (COEP) and Accreditation (COA) to move forward with developing a process for the accreditation of practice doctoral programs in social work.
- CSWE invites feedback on the revisions to the professional practice doctorate accreditation proposal presented on behalf of CSWE’s COEP and COA.
- A detailed list of activities are available on the [CSWE website](http://www.cswe.org).

[CSWE Accreditation](http://www.cswe.org)
Candidacy 101
Candidacy Lingo

- Benchmark 1/BM1/Commission Visit 1/CV1/Pre-Candidacy/Year 1
- Benchmark 2/ BM2/ Commission Visit 2/CV2/Candidacy/Year 2
Benchmark Model

- Three benchmarks in the Candidacy process
- Incorporates all standards in the EPAS, but divided into thirds (1/3 at Compliance in BM1; 1/3 in BM2; 1/3 in BM3)
  - All accreditation standards are re-evaluated for compliance at BM3 for initial accreditation status decision-making
- Later standards build on earlier standards, with multiple touchpoints for feedback and consultation throughout the process
- Important to have draft standards as final as possible at each stage to ensure the best quality feedback from commissioner visitors and specialist (reviews BM1 only)
Benchmark Model (continued)

- **Draft Benchmark 1** → review and consultation by specialist of all Benchmark 1 standards

- **Benchmark 1** → full review of BM1 standards for compliance by Commissioner visitor and consultation on all BM2 standards in draft by commissioner visitor → Candidacy Status Decision

- **Benchmark 2** → full review of BM2 standards for compliance by Commissioner visitor and consultation on all BM3 standards in draft by commissioner visitor → 2nd Year of Candidacy Decision

- **Benchmark 3** → full review of BM3 standards for compliance by commissioner visitor → Initial Accreditation Decision

- **Benchmark Grid** - The Benchmark Model Grid illustrates which features of the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) the program is working on during each benchmark/commission visit
COA REVIEW FOR CANDIDACY STATUS

Submit Letter of Institutional Intent, Eligibility Application Form, and Eligibility Fee

Approval of Letter of Institutional Intent and Eligibility Application Form

Approval of Draft Benchmark 1

Commission Visit Report

Commission Visit

Program Response

30 Days before visit program submits FINAL Benchmark 1 & Review Brief to Commissioner & Specialist

Submit Draft Benchmark 1

During this time, the program and Specialist work together to finalize BM1 document

Overview of Benchmark 1 Process/Steps
COA REVIEW FOR 2ND YEAR OF CANDIDACY STATUS

Overview of Benchmark 2 Process / Steps

30 Days before visit program submits FINAL Benchmark 2 & Review Brief to Commissioner & Specialist

Commission Visit Report

Commission Visit

Program Response

Months in Advance

4-6

3-5

3-5

3-5

0
Overview of Initial Accreditation Process/Steps

11 Months in Advance
- Submit Initial Accreditation Eligibility Application

4-6 Months in Advance
- 30 Days before visit program submits FINAL Initial Accreditation Document & Review Brief to Commissioner & Specialist

3.5 Months in Advance
- Commission Visit

0 Months in Advance
- Commission Visit Report

Program Response

COA REVIEW FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION
Completing the Candidacy process is a 3-1/2-year incremental process that concludes with an Initial Accreditation (full accreditation) decision.

The Candidacy process is focused on a benchmarking model of program development which leads to an Initial Accreditation decision, which is granted for four (4) years.

The program will be reviewed under the same EPAS for the duration of the Candidacy process (including deferrals and progress reports if the program receives an Initial with a PR decision).

Four (4) years after Initial Accreditation, a program is reviewed for reaccreditation (referred to as Reaffirmation).

After the first reaffirmation, programs will be reviewed every eight (8) years.
Once your program is assigned to the February, June or October agenda, the program remains on that same agenda throughout the Candidacy process and into the Reaffirmation process.

If your program is deferred by the COA at any point in the process due to concerns or insufficient information, the program will remain on the original agenda date as long as the concerns are addressed sufficiently and promptly.

Your program is also permitted to request additional time at any point in the process, moving it to a later agenda.

- If your program requests additional time at any point in the process, that will permanently move it to a later agenda.
- Programs should work with DOSWA staff to request additional time as it may/not affect the program’s retroactive accreditation date, including students covered by the program’s accreditation status.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidacy Eligibility Documents</th>
<th>Draft Benchmark I (BM 1) to CSWE</th>
<th>Commissioner Site Visit Dates (3 are scheduled)</th>
<th>Commission on Accreditation (COA) Review Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to CSWE director of accreditation</td>
<td>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by June 1, 2021</td>
<td>E-mail final copy of BM 1 to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to CSWE director of accreditation</td>
<td>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist of accreditation by August 1, 2021</td>
<td>E-mail final copy of BM 1 to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to CSWE director of accreditation</td>
<td>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by October 1, 2021</td>
<td>E-mail final copy of BM 1 to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see Timetables for all due dates: https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process)
Candidacy Timetables

- Your program is not placed on a COA agenda (scheduled for review at the February, June, or October COA meeting), until the program’s Benchmark I document has been approved by the program’s accreditation specialist.

- The timetables are organized around COA meeting dates (February, June, October). Timetables feature:
  - Chronological list of candidacy materials and actions
  - The deadline for each item
  - To whom materials should be submitted

- Once the document is approved, a commissioner visitor will be assigned

- **Timetable for Candidacy - February Agenda**
- **Timetable for Candidacy - June Agenda**
- **Timetable for Candidacy - October Agenda**
Approval(s) to Start the Process

IMPORTANT STEP! Approvals Required in Advance of Application Submission to CSWE’s Accreditation Department. This requirement comprises Eligibility Standard 3 on the Candidacy Eligibility App.

- State higher education and regional accreditation approvals must be obtained prior to submitting application.

- Internal program, institutional, or board approvals should also be in place before applying for candidacy with CSWE.

- These approvals can take anywhere from 6-months to 1-year (or more dependent upon each process) and are required for CSWE staff to accept and process the application.

- Plan accordingly as the Accreditation Department cannot move forward the application without documented approvals at the state- and regional-levels.
Starting the Process

- Submit Letter of Institutional Intent, Candidacy Eligibility Fee, and Candidacy Eligibility Application form with supporting materials.
- Approved by director of the Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) and assigned to an accreditation specialist.
- Draft Benchmark 1 document submitted to accreditation specialist.
- Specialist reviews and identifies any areas for further revision that program must make prior to approval. Specialist and program go back-and-forth until specialist approves document, placing the program on agenda.
- The date of Draft Benchmark 1 approval determines the program's agenda date (February, June, or October).
- Approval of Draft Benchmark 1 formally places program on agenda for first commissioner visit.
- Review Candidacy Timetables for submission dates.
- Review CSWE website for resources, EPAS Policy Handbook, and Formatting and Submission Requirements.
Candidacy Eligibility Application

- Downloadable from cswe.org > Candidacy tab > Eligibility Materials sub-tab

- Six (6) Eligibility Standards (Two (2) more will be at Initial Accreditation stage)
  - Provide response plus supplemental documentation for each standard

- Signed by both social work program director and president/chancellor/designee

- **Eligibility Standard 1**
  - The review of the social work program by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) is authorized by the chief executive officer of the institution.

- **Eligibility Standard 2**
  - The program is located in an educational institution recognized by a regional accrediting body approved by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

- **Eligibility Standard 3**
  - The institution must be legally organized and authorized to operate as a postsecondary educational institution under the laws of the relevant state. The program has been approved by the appropriate higher education authority.
Eligibility Standard 4

- The institution has a written affirmative action policy, plan or program, and procedures, and a policy against discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, ethnic or national origin, disability, or age and documented ADA compliance.

Eligibility Standard 5

- Identify program director with demonstrated leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in the field of social work.
- Director must possess a master’s social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program.
- It is preferred, but not required that director also possess a doctoral degree.

Eligibility Standard 6

- The institution documents sufficient and firm institutional supports to create, build, and maintain the social work program. Include faculty, staff, budget, and other resources necessary to build and maintain the program.
Letter of Institutional Intent

- Helpful application guidelines downloadable from cswe.org > Candidacy tab > Eligibility Materials sub-tab

- Narrative that provides clear, complete, and sufficient information regarding the program and institution’s intent to start a social work program, which includes the following:
  - A discussion of the institution’s mission and the relationship of the social work program to that mission.
  - An analysis of the relationship of the proposed program to the institution’s strategic or long-range plan.
  - A discussion of the costs (including a projected budget) of the program and the benefits or advantages that the institution expects to receive relative to these costs.
  - Preliminary ideas about the mission and goals of the social work program.
  - A summary of the program’s initial development activities.
Program Structure for Master’s Programs

- Master’s programs should be designed to be completed by full-time students in 2 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 2 years, as long as the program is structured to be completed in 2 years.

- May elect to develop a part-time program, which should be designed to be completed within 4 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 4 years, as long as the program is structured to be completed within 4 years.

- These requirements comprise Eligibility Standard 9 on the Initial Accreditation Eligibility App.
Stages of Program Development

- By the time a program is reviewed by the COA for Initial Accreditation, the self-study will be completed; at least one class graduated; and competency-based assessment data collected from program graduates (per policy 3.1.1 Benchmark Model in the EPAS Handbook).

- Only students admitted to the social work program during the academic year in which the program is granted Candidacy will be recognized as having graduated from an accredited program (per policy 3.2.3 Candidacy Policies in the EPAS Handbook).

- Faculty Requirements (AS B/M 3.2.4):
  - 2 full-time for baccalaureate at BM1
  - Master’s – 3 at BM1; 5 at B2; 6 at BM3
  - Faculty must be appointed full-time to social work
Reporting on Faculty

- Complete a Faculty Summary Form
  - Include all full- and part-time social work faculty on the form
- Include a Faculty Data Form (CV) for each faculty member
- Add the “Percentage of Time Assigned Column” and use that sum for the FTE ratio (AS 3.2.3)
- For cross-listed or part-time faculty, in the percent assigned column, use the percent of a full-time workload they contribute to the candidate program
  - E.g. If 10 courses per year is full-time, each course counts as .1FTE
- If you have both BSW & MSW programs, divide the FTE between the two columns, being sure not to double-count time (10th columns combined should add up to 1 FTE per faculty member)
Program Options

Programs must identify all program options while in Pre-Candidacy

- Program options are all locations and delivery methods (review policy 1.2.4 Program Changes in the EPAS Handbook for program option types and definitions).
- Once Candidacy has been granted at the end of pre-candidacy/year 1, programs cannot add new program options
- Once Initial Accreditation is granted, programs can add program options through the substantive change process

Narrative response for each standard must address all program options (per compliance statements)

- With a statement that the narrative applies to all program options; or
- With a description of how each program options complies with the standard

All program options are accredited as part of one single program

- If one program option is out-of-compliance, that affects the compliance of the entire program
Making Changes While in Candidacy

- Permitted to make changes and updates to policies, procedures, curriculum, and assessment plan at any point in the Candidacy process, as long as they remain compliant with the standards.
- Expected to continuously update evolving standards, such as faculty, budget, etc.
- All standards are reviewed at the Initial Accreditation stage for compliance, so programs should be mindful of how changes impact standards that have already been approved.
- Provide personnel updates to accreditation specialist as they occur.
- Primary Contact, Program Director, Field Director, and President are kept on file with CSWE (review policies 1.2.4 Program Changes and 1.2.7. Information Sharing and Release of COA Decision Letter in the EPAS Handbook for more info).
Writing and Submitting Candidacy Documents
Effective June 10, 2019: The COA is paperless! Zero physical copies of accreditation documents are required. E-copies only will be accepted per the policy 1.2.11 Document Formatting & Submission in the EPAS Handbook.
**Document Submission**

- Policy 1.2.11 Document Formatting & Submission in the EPAS Handbook includes detailed formatting info
- 4 Separate Documents:
  - Volume 1 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Volume 2 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Volume 3 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Appropriate Review Brief (MS Word Format only)
- **No scanned documents will be accepted!**
- Submit all documents electronically
  - Email all documents to accreditation specialist
  - Mail two USB copies to accreditation specialist

*(During the Covid-19 era, please only email documents as CSWE headquarters is closed and staff are virtual)*
Programs complete Section 1 by providing basic institutional and program info and identifying program options.

Programs complete Section 2 by inputting the page number of where each compliance and draft standard is located in Volume 1.

- Benchmark I Review Brief (2015 EPAS)
- Benchmark II Review Brief (2015 EPAS)
- Initial Accreditation Review Brief (2015 EPAS)
Writing Candidacy Documents

Please reference:

- Formatting and Submission Requirements
- January 2020 Accreditation Lunch & Learn Presentation: “Writing and Accreditation Document”
- Forms, samples, and resources at cswe.org > Accreditation > Candidacy > variety of helpful sub-tabs
NEW RESOURCES!

The Accreditation Team is thrilled to introduce the:

- **BM1 Volume 1 Template (Optional)**
- **BM2 Volume 1 Template (Optional)**
- **Initial Accreditation Volume I Template (Optional)**

These are *optional* templates for planning and writing purposes; *not* a required format. Programs are encouraged to craft a benchmark/self-study document that clearly responds to the EPAS.

The purpose of these templates are to assist programs with the structuring/outlining the document; *not* to provide content. Programs are solely responsible for documenting compliance with the EPAS.

*Always check the website for the most current forms and accreditation updates!*
Structure of Benchmark Documents

**Volume 1**
- BM1 and BM2
  - Standards for Compliance
  - Standards for Draft
- BM3
  - All standards in Compliance
- All Benchmarks
  - Any tables, forms, supplemental documents, etc., should be incorporated into narrative; not as appendices

**Volume 2**
- BM1
  - Draft syllabi
- BM2 and BM3
  - Final/ revised syllabi

**Volume 3**
- BM1
  - Draft Student Handbook
  - Draft Field Manual
- BM2 and BM3
  - Final Student Handbook
  - Final Field Manual
Commissioner Visits
Commissioners are appointed for up to two (2) consecutive 3-year terms

A diverse group of Commissioners is selected to represent a range of program levels, sizes, locations, and structures

Names and credentials of all commissioners are listed on the CSWE website

Minimum of five (5) years of teaching experience

Experienced site visitors prior to serving on COA

Faculty members at CSWE-accredited social work programs

Current CSWE members
Role of Commission on Accreditation (COA)

- COA (Commission on Accreditation) and COEP (Commission on Educational Policy) develop a new EPAS every eight years with feedback from program members and constituents.
- COA has sole responsibility for determining whether a program complies with accreditation standards.
- Commissioner visitors will never serve as readers for the programs they previously visited.
- Commissioners treat benchmark materials as confidential in their discussions and decision-making.
Role of Commission Visitor

- Commissioners are responsible for visiting programs in Candidacy and serve as consultations to programs during those visits.
- Each program receives a total of three (3) different Commissioner visitors (one (1) per year).
- The Commissioner visitor will review the compliance standards and identify any concerns in the Commission Visit Report.
- The Commissioner visitor will review draft standards and provide consultation and feedback for further development.
- The visitor identifies concerns, but does not make a decision nor determine compliance.
  - The decision and compliance judgements are only made by the readers, who review the full document, Commission visit report, and program response as the basis of the decision.
Arranging Commission Visit

- CSWE’s Site Visit Coordinator will notify the program and visitor of the assignment at each stage.
- Once the program receives the visitor’s name, establish communication promptly to agree upon a visit date.
- Work with the visitor to schedule meetings with:
  - President, Chancellor, or Designee
  - Faculty
  - Students
  - Field instructors, field personnel, any other constituent groups
  - Exit interview with program director and anyone the director chooses to invite
- Individuals/stakeholder groups can only meet with the visitor with the program director’s permission.
- Program should pre-pay flight and hotel.
- Programs are advised to purchase **refundable and transferrable** transportation and accommodations to avoid incurring fees in the event of visit cancellation or delay.
- Arrange ground transportation from hotel:
  - Faculty pick-up is preferred, but ask visitor if they have other preferences.
- Program should reimburse transportation to/from Commissioner visitor’s hotel, travel day meals, and appropriate incidentals.
Arranging Commissioner Visit

- Commissioner visitor reviews 1\textsuperscript{st} half of standards on review brief for compliance
- Commissioner visitor reviews 2\textsuperscript{nd} half of (draft) standards on review brief for recommendations for further development
  - Come prepared with questions and consultative topics to receive guidance and support on your draft standards, which will be reviewed for compliance in the next stage
- Commissioner visitor completes report using the review brief
  - Benchmark 1 Review Brief; Benchmark 2 Review Brief; or Initial Accreditation Review Brief
  - Downloadable from cswe.org > Candidacy tab > Select corresponding BM1, BM2, or Initial sub-tab
- Commissioner identifies concerns, but does not determine compliance
- The visitor identifies concerns, but does not make a decision nor determine compliance as that authority rests with the COA readers
NEW RESOURCE!

The Accreditation Team is thrilled to introduce the:

**Sample Commission Visit Schedule (Optional)**

This template is *optional* templates for planning and scheduling purposes; *not* a required format. Programs are encouraged to craft an agenda in collaboration with the commission visitor.

Actual commission visit agendas, including constituencies/stakeholder groups involved, vary according to the clarifications requested by the commission visitor after reviewing the program’s benchmark documents.

*Always check the website for the most current forms and accreditation updates!*
Accreditation Resources
CSWE Accreditation Web Resources

- **Candidacy Documents** - [https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process](https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process) (select Candidacy)
  - Preparation → formatting requirements, Benchmark Grid, preparatory resources
  - Benchmark 1/2/3 → all required forms submitted at each stage
  - Timetables → timetables for the Candidacy process
  - Resources → sample format for curriculum matrices and assessment plan

- **Accreditation PowerPoints**
  - Topics: 2015 EPAS Overview, Assessment, Candidacy, Frequently Cited Standards, Writing an Accreditation Document

- **2015 EPAS & Glossary**
- **2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide**
- **2015 EPAS Handbook**
- **Candidacy Training**
- **Formatting & Submission Requirements**
- **Directory of Accredited Programs**
- **COA Decisions**
- **Accreditation COVID-19 Response**
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE SPECIALIST

• Provide accurate accreditation-related information and resources to programs and the public
• Provide guidance in navigating the reaffirmation or candidacy process
• Assist in understanding accreditation policies and procedures
• Conduct trainings and offer educational opportunities
• Communicate with the program’s designated primary contact (policy 1.2.7 in the EPAS Handbook)
• Provide customized consultation on the accreditation process and EPAS via phone, email, video, or in-person at CSWE’s Annual Program Meeting (APM) and the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) annual conference
  • YouCanBookMe scheduling app linked in each specialist’s email signature
• Does **not** determine compliance/noncompliance

*When in doubt, ask your specialist!*
• [Program] is currently in Pre-Candidacy for Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation.

• Pre-Candidacy for a baccalaureate or master’s social work program by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation indicates that it has submitted an application to be reviewed for Candidacy. A program that has attained Pre-Candidacy has not yet been reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation or been verified to be in compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. The Council on Social Work Education does not publicly disclose whether programs have currently attained Pre-Candidacy Status until they are granted Candidacy.

• Students who enter the program while it is still in Pre-Candidacy will not be recognized as attending a program in Candidacy unless the program attains Candidacy in the academic year in which those students enter. The Candidacy Process is typically a three-year process and there is no guarantee that a program in Pre-Candidacy will eventually attain Candidacy or Initial Accreditation. Students who enter programs that attain Candidacy in or before the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program once the program attains Initial Accreditation. Candidacy by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation applies to all program sites and program delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

• For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact Accreditation.
Statement for Programs in Candidacy to Post on their Web Sites

• [Program] has achieved Candidacy for Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation.

• Candidacy for a baccalaureate or master’s social work program by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation indicates that it has made progress toward meeting criteria for the assessment of program quality evaluated through a peer review process. A program that has attained Candidacy has demonstrated a commitment to meeting the compliance standards set by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, but has not yet demonstrated full compliance.

• Students who enter programs that attain Candidacy in or before the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program once the program attains Initial Accreditation. Candidacy is typically a three-year process and attaining Candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain Initial Accreditation. Candidacy applies to all program sites and program delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

• For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact Accreditation.

Per policy 1.1.3 in the EPAS Handbook
2015 EPAS Overview
Competency-Based Education

• The nine (9) Social Work Competencies are listed in the EPAS on pg. 7-9. Programs must use the competencies verbatim for generalist practice, but may add competencies that are consistent with their mission and goals and respond to their context.

• Holistic Competence - the demonstration of competence informed by four (4) dimensions:
  • Knowledge
  • Values
  • Skills
  • Cognitive/Affective Processes

• The dimensions of each competency are represented (paragraph description)

• The dimensions are operationalized in real or simulated practice by behaviors (bullet points)

Nine Social Work Competencies
2015 EPAS

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
Generalist Practice  
(Baccalaureate & Master’s programs)

- Uses the nine (9) competencies and behaviors as written in the 2015 EPAS.
- Competencies include a paragraph describing the dimensions of the competencies and behaviors that operationalize the competency through real or simulated practice situations (e.g., field education).
- Programs can add additional competencies.
  - Additional competencies should relate to your program’s specific mission or context. Added competencies must be covered in the curriculum and assessed for in the generalist and/or specialized levels.
Specialized Practice
(Master’s Programs)

“Extends and enhances” the nine (9) social work competencies for each area of specialized practice (AS M2.1.3).

Programs must write a specialized paragraph (guides curriculum content) that cover all four (4) dimensions and specialized behaviors (observable/demonstratable components operationalized in field and/or simulations) for each competency. Repeat this process for each specialization.

Programs must use the competency titles verbatim, but develop the paragraph and behavior(s) for each specialization.

- Only exception is the titles for competencies 6-9 can be modified to reflect only the systems level(s) that apply to the area of specialized practice

Programs may add additional competencies that are specific to the area of specialized practice as part of how they extend and enhance
Content in the curriculum matrix references where and how each competency is taught/learned through the required curriculum.

This is not where competencies are assessed, but is where it is taught in the curriculum to ensure competence prior to assessment at some later point.

Programs must provide content related to all four (4) dimensions of every competency.

Include the best example(s) of where the competency is covered, rather than all places.

Only required social work courses/content should be mapped; not electives.

Programs are expected to provide syllabi for all courses identified in the curriculum matrix.
• Programs are expected to identify courses/content related to each of the five (5) systems levels for competencies 6-9.

• At minimum, programs are required to provide content for all four (4) dimensions for each competency as a whole, not for each systems level.

• A curriculum matrix is required for both the generalist level (BSW & MSW programs) and specialized level (master’s programs).

• MSW programs must produce a matrix for each specialization mapped to the extended/enhanced competencies.
At least two (2) measures assess each competency:

- One (1) measure based on demonstration of the competency in real or simulated practice situations (incorporating behaviors).
- One (1) or more other measure(s) based on demonstration of competency, but does not need to incorporate behaviors or be based on outcomes in real or simulated practice.

Identify the dimension(s) addressed with each measure for each competency. At least two (2) dimensions of each competency required to be assessed.

Baccalaureate programs must have a minimum of two (2) measures for each competency at the generalist level.

Master’s programs must have a minimum of two (2) measures for each competency at both the generalist and specialized levels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Competency Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Behavior(s)</th>
<th>Dimension(s)</th>
<th>Outcome Measure Benchmark (minimum score or higher)</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures: Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures: Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>80% of students</td>
<td>Measure 1: Field Instrument</td>
<td>1. apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels (field instrument item #6)</td>
<td>Knowledge; C/A Processes</td>
<td>For Measure 1: Students must score a minimum of 4 out of 5 points on each item (6-8).</td>
<td>Determine the percentage of students that attained each outcome measure (e.g., minimum score of higher). Average the percentages together to obtain the percentage of students demonstrating competence inclusive of 2 or more measures. Determine if this percentage is greater than the competency benchmark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. present themselves as learners and engage clients</td>
<td>C/A Processes; Values</td>
<td>For Measure 1: Aggregate student scores on items 8, 7, &amp; 9 on field evaluation. (Field instrument provided on pp. XX-XX)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Measure 2:</td>
<td>3. apply self-awareness and self-regulation to practice</td>
<td>Skills; Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Programs must assess at least two (2) dimensions of each competency between the two (2) (or more) measures
- Measure based on real or simulated practice must incorporate the bulleted behaviors
  - Most popular practice-based measure is a field evaluation
  - For competencies 6-9, don’t need to assess every systems level
  - Outcome-measure benchmark is minimum score students are aiming for on each measure
  - Competency benchmark is minimum percent of students expected to meet outcome-measure benchmarks inclusive of all measures
Assessment Plan, sample 1  
(Real or Simulated Practice Measure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Competency Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>Measure 1: Field Instrument</th>
<th>Dimension(s)</th>
<th>Outcome Measure Benchmark (minimum score or higher)</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures: Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures: Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>90% of students will demonstrate competence inclusive of 2 or more measures</td>
<td>Knowledge; Values; Skills; Cognitive/ Affective Processes</td>
<td>For Measure 1: Students must score a minimum of 4 out of 5 points on item #2.</td>
<td>For Measure 1: Score on item #2 of field evaluation (based on the students’ demonstration of behaviors) (Field instrument provided on pp. XX-XX)</td>
<td>Determine the percentage of students that attained each outcome measure (e.g., minimum score of higher). Average the percentages together to obtain the percentage of students demonstrating competence inclusive of 2 or more measures. Determine if this percentage is greater than the competency benchmark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each behavior related to the competency is not scored individually in this sample, and therefore behavior-level assessment scores are not included in the assessment plan. If the program elects to assess at the competency-level, rather than the behavior-level, the instrument capturing competency-based student learning outcomes in real or simulated practice situations must list the behaviors associated with that competency on the instrument.
### Assessment Plan, sample 2
(not necessarily Real/Simulated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Competency Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Brief Description of the Measure</th>
<th>Dimension(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures</th>
<th>Outcome Measure Benchmark</th>
<th>Assessment Procedures: Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>90% of students will demonstrate competence inclusive of 2 or more measures</td>
<td>Measure 2: Course- Embedded Measure Exercise on Privilege in SW550: Diversity in Social Work Practice</td>
<td>Students complete a reflective journal entry on how the intersectionality of diverse identities influences social work practice and the role of self-awareness of power, privilege, personal bases, and cultural competency in engaging with clients and systems</td>
<td>Knowledge, Values, C/A Processes</td>
<td>For Measure 2: Aggregate student scores on rubric items 9-15 (Rubric provided on pp. XX-XX) *</td>
<td>For Measure 2: Students must score a minimum of 8 out of 10 points on each rubric item (9-15).</td>
<td>Determine the percentage of students that attained each outcome measure (e.g., minimum score of higher). Average the percentages together to obtain the percentage of students demonstrating competence inclusive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Second measure (and optional additional measures) assessed at competency level
- All outcome measures must be based on a faculty member or field personnel assessing demonstration of student competence
- Example outcome measures:
  - Exit Exam
  - Capstone Project
  - Portfolio
  - Final Presentation
  - Course-Embedded Measures
- Each measure must include a tool/rubric where students are given a separate score for each competency assessed
- Either directly giving a score for attainment of the competency; or Giving a score for items on the rubric related to the competency that are aggregated
Sample Assessment Findings (AS 4.0.2)

- Present a separate table of assessment outcomes for each program option to determine the percent of all students in that program option that demonstrate competence
  - Program options are locations and delivery methods
- Aggregate all program options in a separate table to determine the percentage of all students that demonstrate competence
- Baccalaureate – generalist assessment
- Master’s – both generalist and specialized assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Competency Benchmark</th>
<th>Outcome Measure &amp; Benchmark (Minimum Score)</th>
<th>Percent Attaining</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Achieving Competency</th>
<th>Competency Attained?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>90% of students will demonstrate competence inclusive of 2 or more measures</td>
<td>Measure 1: Field Instrument Students must score a minimum of 4 out of 5 points.</td>
<td>Measure 1: Behavior 1*: 92% Behavior 2*: 91% Behavior 3*: 85% *Include behavior-level data if each behavior related to the competency is scored individually; if behaviors are not scored individually, include the competency-level data</td>
<td>92% + 91% + 85% = 268/3 = 89.67% 89.67% + 73% = 162.67 / 2 = 83.83%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2: Course-embedded Measure, Exercise on Privilege in SW6550 Students must score a minimum of 8 out of 10 points.</td>
<td>Measure 2: 76%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Accreditation Standard 4.0.2 Sample Results for Assessment of Practice Competencies

AS 4.0.2: The program provides its most recent year of summary data and outcomes for the assessment of each of the identified competencies, specifying the percentage of students achieving program benchmarks for each program option.

For this standard, provide the data. The accompanying narrative explains to the reader how to understand and interpret the table.
Implicit Curriculum Assessment

• Minimally one area of implicit curriculum is required to be assessed, and programs can change the area annually.
• This assessment focuses on the implicit curriculum (learning environment) not the explicit curriculum (coursework, competencies, behaviors, or dimensions).
• This may include but is not limited to an assessment of the elements of Educational Policy 3.0:
  o The program’s commitment to diversity
  o Admissions policies and procedures
  o Advisement
  o Retention and termination policies
  o Student participation in governance
  o Faculty
  o Administrative structure
  o Resources
• Stakeholders may include but are not limited to: Students, Faculty, Alumni, Field instructors, Community Advisory Board, etc.
• How is the program proactive on the basis of its findings?
• Each program option should be explicitly addressed in response to each standard.
How to Choose an Implicit Assessment

Assess an area that fits the needs of your program; the implicit assessment is not limited to these examples

**Implicit Curriculum Area**
- Diversity
- Admissions policies and procedures
- Advisement
- Retention and termination policies
- Student participation in governance
- Faculty
- Administrative Structure
- Resources
- Other

**Stakeholder**
- Students
- Faculty
- Alumni
- Field instructors
- Community Advisory Board
- Other

**Method**
- Exit surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Alumni surveys
- Culture/climate surveys
- Strategic planning process
- Other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<td>Accreditation-related fees</td>
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<td>Reaffirmation/Candidacy workshops</td>
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<td>Site visitor procedures/Training</td>
<td>Sheila Bell</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:sbell@cswe.org">sbell@cswe.org</a></td>
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<td>File a complaint/Request a waiver</td>
<td>Mary Kurfess</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:mkurfess@cswe.org">mkurfess@cswe.org</a></td>
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<td>Any other accreditation-related questions;</td>
<td>Anna Holster</td>
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<td>Kat Gibson-Ledl</td>
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Thank You!