Accreditation Lunch & Learn: Exploring and applying for Candidacy

Thursday, May 7, 2020 | 2-3pm ET | Zoom
Welcome!

This webinar is being recorded
Available on the CSWE website by May 11, 2020

Pre-candidacy and related questions submitted during registration

We have 100 participants on today’s webinar and may not be able to answer all questions that are submitted in Chat or Q&A at the end

If you have additional pre-candidacy questions, please schedule a consultation with the Director of Accreditation, Mary Kurfess, at mkurfess@cswe.org.

If you have already been assigned, contact your Accreditation Specialist
Meet The Accreditation team

Your Webinar Facilitators are the Director, Mary Kurfess, and the five (5) Accreditation Specialists!

- 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
Agenda

Exploring and Applying for Candidacy

Framework for Accreditation
Getting Started
Timetables
Candidacy Process
Application Forms
Writing Benchmark I
Resources
Q & A
Framework for Accreditation
Framework for Accreditation

The primary purposes of accreditation:

- Quality Assurance - Academic improvement - Public accountability

• Social work accreditation is a peer-review process.
• Members serving on the Commission on Accreditation (COA) are volunteer social work faculty
• COA accredits baccalaureate and master’s level programs
• The CSWE - COA is the sole and final arbiter of program compliance with accreditation standards
Framework for Accreditation

• Accreditation is a program-initiated process
• Social work programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the 2015 EPAS
• The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) staff liaise between the COA and the social work programs:
  - provide consultation services
  - education and training
  - accreditation policies and procedures
  - send COA decision letters to programs
Framework for Accreditation

• The COA is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

• CSWE is the only recognized social work accrediting body for the United States and its territories

• The professional judgements of the COA are based on the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

• The EPAS are developed/revised every seven years by the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and the COA.
Getting Started
BEFORE CSWE:
Approval to Start the Process

IMPORTANT STEP: Approvals Required in Advance of Application Submission to CSWE’s Accreditation Department

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

• Internal program, institutional, or board approvals

• These approvals can take anywhere from 6-months to 1-year or more dependent upon each process and the materials required for approval.

• Plan accordingly as the Accreditation Department cannot moved forward the application without documented approvals at the state- and regional- levels.
TERMS

• Pre-Candidacy
  The time before the COA awards a program Candidacy status

• Candidacy
  Term used broadly to refer to a 3+ year period of time before the COA grants a program Initial Accreditation

• Benchmarks I, II, and III
  Year/phase 1, 2, and 3 of the Candidacy process
  Also refers to a document turned in during each year of Candidacy

• CV I, II, and III
  Commissioner site visit 1, 2, & 3 corresponding with Benchmarks 1, 2, & 3

• Candidacy Status, 2nd Year of Candidacy, Initial Accreditation
  Decisions by the COA after each Benchmark
Benchmarks

• The benchmark model is a 3 year systematic, incremental approach to developing a social work program and writing a comprehensive self-study.
  • Some of the accreditation standards addressed at Benchmark I;
  • more at Benchmark II,
  • all at Benchmark III

• The first portion of the Benchmark (I or II) document consists of specific accreditation standards with which the program must be in compliance

• The second portion of each Benchmark (I, or II) consists of standards that must be addressed in writing by the program in draft form.

• At Benchmark III, an entire self-study with narrative written showing program compliance with all accreditation standards is reviewed for Initial Accreditation.
Commissioner Visits

- Program development is guided by COA commissioners who visit the program in person (in COVID-19, the visit is virtual)
  - At Benchmark I
  - At Benchmark II
  - At Benchmark III

- During each visit the commissioner consults with the program concerning its
  - Compliance with designated standards
  - Its progress with standards due in draft
# MAJOR CANDIDACY DUE DATES

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

<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>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jan 31, 2021</strong>&lt;br&gt;Due to CSWE director of accreditation&lt;br&gt;Accreditation will apply to students entering Fall 2021 and beyond.</td>
<td><strong>Due to CSWE accreditation specialist by no later than March 15, 2021</strong>&lt;br&gt;Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by June 1, 2021&lt;br&gt;Benchmark II &amp; II: see timetable</td>
<td>• Visit 1: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2021&lt;br&gt;• Visit 2: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2022&lt;br&gt;• Visit 3: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2023&lt;br&gt;E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
<td>• Candidacy Status Review–February 2022&lt;br&gt;• Year 2 Candidacy Review–February 2023&lt;br&gt;• Initial Accreditation–February 2024</td>
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<td>• Visit 1: Dec 1, 2021-Feb 28, 2022&lt;br&gt;• Visit 2: Dec 1, 2022-Feb 28, 2023&lt;br&gt;• Visit 3: Dec 1, 2023-Feb 28, 2024&lt;br&gt;E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
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<td><strong>Due to CSWE accreditation specialist by no later than July 15, 2021</strong>&lt;br&gt;Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by October 1, 2021&lt;br&gt;Benchmark II &amp; III: see timetable</td>
<td>• Visit 1: March 1-May 31, 2022&lt;br&gt;• Visit 2: March 1-May 31, 2023&lt;br&gt;• Visit 3: March 1-May 31, 2024&lt;br&gt;E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</td>
<td>• Candidacy Status Review–Oct 2022&lt;br&gt;• Year 2 Candidacy Review–Oct 2023&lt;br&gt;• Initial Accreditation–Oct 2024</td>
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Candidacy Timetables

• Programs are given a timetable for placed on a COA agenda when the application documents are approved and a Specialist is assigned.

• **However**, the timetable may be moved to a later agenda if the program is unable to meet the due dates for submission of materials.

• The timetables are organized around COA meeting dates (February, June, October).
  • 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**
Pre-Candidacy Process and Agenda Timetable

- Program Submits *Candidacy Eligibility Application* and *Letter of Institutional Intent*
- Director reviews application and notifies program of result
- Once application materials are approved, Director assigns an Accreditation Specialist to the program
- Program submits Benchmark I document DRAFT
  - with accompanying *Benchmark I Review Brief* (form)
- Specialist reviews the draft and provides feedback
- Once the Specialist approves the Benchmark I document, the program is cleared to have a commissioner (site) visit.
- Commissioner Visit Report and Program Response
- COA meets to determine Candidacy status
- If Candidacy status is granted, write Benchmark II and submit to Commissioner Visitor and Specialist 1 month prior to visit. Programs do not submit drafts of Benchmark II and III documents for approval.
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

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

Program Response

Commission Visit Report

Overview of Benchmark 1 Process/Steps

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

Signed by both social work program director and president/chancellor

• **Eligibility Standard 1** - *submit signed authorization form*
  • 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** - *submit approval by state; approval or notification required by institutional accreditor*
  • 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 – submit link or screenshot documentation**
  • 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

• 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.
    • It is not necessary to use the Budget Form that will be needed later for Benchmark I
  • 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.
Reference Documents Used for Writing Benchmark I

• 2015 *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (EPAS)

• **Benchmark Grid** - The Benchmark Model chart illustrates which accreditation standards the program is working on during each commissioner visit

• Benchmark I template – watch the website; templates for Benchmarks I, II, III are being developed and will be posted soon

• **Benchmark I Review Brief**

• **Budget Form**

• Faculty Summary Form
Reporting on Faculty

Include all full- and part-time faculty

Include a faculty data form for each faculty member

Add up percentage of time assigned column and use that sum for the ratio

For cross-listed or part-time faculty, in the percent assigned column, use the percent of a full-time (teaching-only) workload they teach
  - 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 (Both columns combined should add up to 1 FTE)

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<th>Initials and Surname of Faculty Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hire Date</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Tenure Track (Yes/No/NA)</th>
<th>Years of Practice Experience</th>
<th>Post-BSW</th>
<th>Post-MSW</th>
<th>Years of Employment as Full-Time Educator</th>
<th>Percentage of Time Assigned to Program</th>
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**TOTAL FTE OF ALL FACULTY:** (sum) (sum)

*Combine full-time and part-time work into full-time equivalence years of full-time teaching, based on your institution's workload policy.

**If part-time, identify percent of a full-time workload assigned to the program, based on your institution's workload policy.
Making Changes While in Candidacy

- Programs may make changes and updates to policies and procedures at any point in the Candidacy process, as long as changes are compliant with the EPAS.
- Avoid changes to core curriculum on which student demonstration of competencies will be assessed.
- Avoid changing or adding areas of specialized practice (master’s programs).
- Be aware of changed standards or interpretations that will have impact on the program (e.g. COVID-19 temporarily reduced field hours).
- All standards are reviewed at Initial Accreditation, so be mindful of how program changes impact standards that passed previous Benchmarks.
- Provide personnel updates to accreditation specialist as they occur.
  - Primary Contact, Program Director, Field Director, and President are kept on file with CSWE.
Program Options

- Programs must specify their program options while in Pre-Candidacy
  - Program options are all locations and delivery methods
  - Once Candidacy has been granted at the end of the year of Pre-Candidacy, programs cannot add new program options
  - Once Initial Accreditation is granted, programs can add program options through substantive change process

- Narrative response for each standard must address all program options
  - 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
Document Submission

4 Separate Documents submitted with each Benchmark:

• Volume 1 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
• Volume 2 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
• Volume 3 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
• Appropriate Review Brief (Benchmark I, II, or III) (MS Word Format only)

Submit all documents electronically
Accreditation Specialists

- Assist in understanding the COA’s policies and procedures
- Do not determine compliance/noncompliance
- All communications are facilitated via the program’s primary contact
- YouCanBookMe scheduling app is linked in email signature block for your convenience
- Should questions arise regarding accreditation, always confirm accuracy with your program’s accreditation specialist!