



**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
Board of Accreditation (BOA)
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Baccalaureate and Master’s Social Work Program Accreditation

Last updated January 16, 2024— **Updates are highlighted**

Note: All questions regarding accreditation should be directed to the [accreditation team](#).

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International Social Work Degrees

- 1. Are social work programs outside the United States accredited by CSWE?**
 - a. No. The accrediting authority of CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA) extends only to the United States and its territories. If you attended a social work program overseas and wish to work in the United States, it is advisable to have your degree evaluated by CSWE's [International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service \(ISWDRES\)](#).
 - b. Although CSWE does not accredit social work programs in Canada, graduates of Canadian programs accredited by the [CASWE](#) (formerly CASSW) are recognized through a [memorandum of understanding](#) as having earned a degree equivalent to graduates from a CSWE-BOA-accredited program.

- 2. Does CSWE or ISWDRES keep a list of international social work programs previously recognized as equivalent?**
 - a. No. CSWE's [International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service \(ISWDRES\)](#) evaluates individually earned degrees, not the social work programs from which the degree was earned. Thus, there are no pre-approved international social work programs. Each applicant is reviewed individually and independently after earning their degree. The only exception is graduates covered by the [memorandum of understanding](#) with [CASWE](#) (formerly CASSW), the Canadian social work accrediting agency, are automatically recognized as having earned a degree equivalent to graduates from a CSWE-BOA-accredited program.

Scope of Accreditation

- 3. What accreditation services does CSWE provide?**
 - a. The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) has outlined their [scope, services, resources, and boundaries](#) and posted it publicly to the [CSWE accreditation webpage](#).

- 4. What programs does BOA accredit?**
 - a. The Board of Accreditation (BOA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the [Council on Higher Education Accreditation \(CHEA\)](#) to accredit baccalaureate and master's social work degree programs in the United States and its territories.
 - b. In addition to baccalaureate and master's program accreditation, CSWE-BOA also accredits [post-master's social work fellowship programs](#) and is currently piloting accreditation processes for [professional practice doctoral programs](#).
 - c. CSWE does not accredit Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs, associate degree programs, or minors in social work.

- 5. Why does CSWE-BOA not accredit associate degree programs, PhD programs, and minors?**
 - a. CSWE-BOA limits its accreditation function to programs that prepare students for professional social work practice (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, professional practice doctoral, and post-master's fellowship programs). In general, associate

degree programs prepare students for paraprofessional-level positions in social service agencies. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs are typically research-oriented and primarily prepare students for academic, research, or administrative positions. Additionally, zero health profession accreditors regulate PhD programs. Minors prepare students for exploration of professional social work pathways.

6. Where can I find trustworthy accreditation information?

- a. CSWE's [Department of Social Work Accreditation \(DOSWA\)](#) is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.
- b. The accreditation team has worked diligently to clarify and provide disclaimers that accreditation-related information not published or provided directly by the accreditation team or CSWE-BOA is not vetted by nor officially endorsed.
- c. This includes any information shared by CSWE members, faculty, administrators, consultants, and vendors in shared academic spaces, such as CSWE's Annual Program Meeting (APM).

7. Is accreditation-related information shared at CSWE's Annual Program Meeting (APM) reliable, valid, and accurate?

- a. If the information is shared directly by member(s) of the accreditation team, then **yes**, it is accurate. The only endorsed services, content, trainings and workshops, publications, presentations, templates, tools, sample matrices, resources, etc. are those that CSWE-BOA or the accreditation team create and publish ourselves on the [CSWE accreditation website](#).
- b. If the information is shared by any other party external to the CSWE's accreditation team, then **no**, the information may be inaccurate. Other parties may include CSWE members, faculty, administrators, consultants, vendors, etc. Always verify the source of your information and [contact the accreditation team](#) to ensure you are receiving the most accurate and current information!
- c. Companies are welcome to exhibit at CSWE's annual conference, however, that does not mean that CSWE, the accreditation team, nor CSWE-BOA is endorsing their product. The exhibit hall is outside of the purview of the accrediting agency.
- d. Finally, it is not a function of the CSWE-BOA to evaluate external accreditation-related information or products for compliance with the EPAS. Rather programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the EPAS. Programs are then independently reviewed for compliance via the peer-reviewed accreditation processes. Programs are empowered to review the variety of rich resources available on the [CSWE accreditation website](#) and/or contact their [program's accreditation specialist](#) as questions arise.

8. Does CSWE have a list of qualified consultants to help us with our accreditation processes?

- a. No. Per **Policy 1.8 Use of Consultants** in the [Accreditation Policies](#), CSWE does not recommend the use of external paid consultants. External consultants hired by programs to assist in their reaffirmation of accreditation or progression through candidacy status are not employees or agents of CSWE. CSWE is in no way

responsible for the services provided by such consultants, and in no way does CSWE guarantee, recommend, or endorse the services of any consultant.

- b. It is recommended that your program review the [accreditation services](#) offered and collaborate with your [program's accreditation specialist](#), as the accreditation team is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.

Verifying Accreditation Status

9. How do I know if my social work program is accredited?

- a. A comprehensive list of accredited and candidacy programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on the CSWE website.

10. My program is expecting an accreditation decision from the CSWE-BOA. When will this information be shared?

- a. Changes in accreditation status are posted publicly 30-days following each CSWE-BOA meeting on the [CSWE website](#).
 - i. February BOA meeting decisions are posted mid-March.
 - ii. June BOA meeting decisions are posted mid-July.
 - iii. October BOA meeting decision are posted mid-November.
- b. Per **Policy 3.13 Decision Letters** in the [Accreditation Policies](#), official decision letters are sent electronically to programs **30 days** after each CSWE-BOA meeting
 - i. February BOA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late March.
 - ii. June BOA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late July.
 - iii. October BOA meeting decision letters are sent mid-late November.

11. I couldn't find my social work program listed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). Is my program accredited?

- a. Our [directory](#) is searchable by all institutional names, program names, and former names.
- b. Be sure to also check [Formerly Accredited or Approved BSW Programs](#) or [Formerly Accredited MSW Programs](#).
- c. If you are unable to locate a record of your social work program on the CSWE website, then it may not be accredited.
- d. Contact a member of the [accreditation team](#) to verify the status of your social work program.

12. Does CSWE have a list of accredited doctoral-level social work programs?

- a. CSWE's Board of Accreditation is currently piloting the accreditation of professional practice doctoral programs (i.e., DSW programs). PhD programs are not accredited by CSWE-BOA. Please visit this [website](#) for further information regarding the piloting initiative.

Pre-Candidacy & Candidacy Status

13. What does it mean when a program is in candidacy?

- a. Candidacy indicates that the social work program has made progress toward meeting criteria for the program quality assessment as evaluated via 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 (EPAS) but has not yet demonstrated full compliance.
- b. 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 as long as the program attains Initial Accreditation. Candidacy is typically a three (3) year process and attaining Candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain Initial Accreditation. Candidacy applies to all program sites (i.e., locations) and delivery methods of the program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.
- c. Once a program is granted initial accreditation, it is issued a retroactive accreditation date to reflect the academic year in which the program was granted candidacy.
 - i. For example, if a program was granted candidacy status in the academic year of 2022-2023, any student entering the program in the fall of 2022 and beyond will be considered to have graduated from an accredited social work program so long as the program receives its eventual Initial Accreditation.
- d. Read more about the Candidacy process in [Section 5: Candidacy & Initial Accreditation](#) of the [Accreditation Policies](#) housed on the CSWE website.
- e. To understand how candidacy status will affect you as a student, contact your social work program director and/or a member of the [accreditation team](#). Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

14. What does it mean when a program is pre-candidacy?

- a. Pre-Candidacy indicates that the social work program has submitted an application to be reviewed for Candidacy. A program that has attained Pre-Candidacy has not yet been reviewed by CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA) or been verified to be in compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).
- b. 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.
- c. The Candidacy Process is typically a three (3)-year process and there is no guarantee that a program in Pre-Candidacy will eventually attain Candidacy or Initial Accreditation.
- d. 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 as long as the program attains Initial Accreditation.

- e. If a student enters a program prior to the academic year in which the program received Candidacy, that student's degree will not be covered by the program's retroactive accreditation status and will not be recognized as a graduate from a CSWE-accredited program.
- f. Pre-Candidacy applies to all program sites (i.e., locations) and delivery methods of the program.
- g. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.
- h. Read more about the Pre-Candidacy process in the [Section 5: Candidacy & Initial Accreditation](#) of the [Accreditation Policies](#) housed on the CSWE website.
- i. To understand how candidacy status will affect you as a student, contact your social work program director and/or a member of the [accreditation team](#). Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

Conditional Status

15. My program was placed on conditional accredited status. How does this affect me as a student?

- a. Students who graduate from programs on Conditional Accredited Status will still be recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program.
- b. Changes in accreditation status are posted publicly 30-days following each CSWE-BOA meeting on the [CSWE website](#).
 - i. February BOA meeting decisions are posted mid-March.
 - ii. June BOA meeting decisions are posted mid-July.
 - iii. October BOA meeting decision are posted mid-November.
- c. The CSWE-BOA places a program on conditional accredited status when the program is found out of compliance with one (1) or more Educational Policy or Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within one (1) year. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the CSWE-BOA's decision, it submits a restoration report within one (1) year.

Selecting a Social Work Program

16. How do I decide which social work program is best for me?

- a. Students are encouraged to select a program that meets both your professional and personal goals.
- b. Ask practical questions, such as:
 - i. Can I live here for the next two (2) or four (4) years?
 - ii. Is the program delivered in a way that supports my learning style and lifestyle needs (i.e., online, hybrid, location-based, evening and weekend options, campus experience, etc.)?
 - iii. Is it affordable?

- iv. Is the institution too large or too small?
- v. Will I need to commute?
- vi. Does the program offer the specialization or concentration I want?
- vii. Does the program appear to have a faculty and staff with whom I can collaborate?
- viii. Are there ample field placement opportunities in my area of interest?
- c. You can access CSWE's online [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) to review a listing of accredited and candidate social work programs. The Directory is sortable by several features, attributes, and options to assist you in narrowing your search. Once you have located programs that interest you, you are encouraged to use the contact information in the directory to contact those programs directly.

17. Which are the best social work programs in the United States?

- a. CSWE-BOA accredits social work education programs; it does not provide qualitative information, subjective judgments, nor opinions about programs. Nor do we compare or "rank" them. Accreditation is meant to provide assurance that a program has met the profession's minimum standards for professional social work education.

18. Can CSWE provide me guidance or advice in selecting a social work program for me?

- a. No, providing enrollment guidance or career advice is not a service CSWE provides as we do not rank, recommend, nor comment on the quality of accredited and candidate programs. All accredited and candidate programs must meet the current set of standards. As an accrediting body, CSWE-BOA maintains ethical boundaries and impartiality.
- b. We do offer a variety of resources to assist in selecting an accredited program. CSWE houses the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). You are encouraged to utilize the Directory, which is sortable by a number of features, as you reflect on your career goals and make an informed decision about your educational journey.

19. Does CSWE have a master list of tuition and fees for each accredited program?

- a. No, this is not a service provided by CSWE as tuition, fees, and other expenses associated with educational programs is governed by each individual institution. Review the social work program's website for information regarding cost of attendance or contact the program directly. Contact information for all accredited and candidate social work programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on CSWE website.

20. Does CSWE offer scholarships, fellowships, grants, or other funding for my social work studies?

- a. Learn more about CSWE offerings and external funding opportunities on the [CSWE website](#).

Online & Distance Learning

21. Are there any CSWE-BOA-accredited, distance-learning or online learning social work programs?

- a. Yes, the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) includes online program options and all locations covered by the program's accreditation status. All accredited and candidate programs are subject to the same accreditation standards and review criteria by CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA), regardless of the curriculum delivery methods used.
- b. Many accredited social work programs utilize distance education for some or all of their courses and curriculum. Many offer part-time, extended-day, or evening courses at their main, satellite, or branch campuses.
- c. Each program design is different, and each may have specific admissions requirements for its distance-education programs. Please contact your program of interest directly to inquire! Contact information for all accredited and candidate social work programs is housed in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) on CSWE website.

22. How can a program permanently offer an online program option?

- a. Programs planning to permanently offer an online program option must complete the substantive change process detailed in Policy 4.9 Program Changes in the [Accreditation Policies](#). Programs must submit a completed Substantive Change Proposal a minimum 3-6 months in advance of their implementation date to request approval.

Admissions

23. Can I enter an accredited master's social work program without a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree?

- a. No. The criteria for admission to a master's social work program must include an earned baccalaureate degree in any discipline from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.
- b. This includes individuals whose degree was recognized as equivalent through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service (ISWDRES) and graduates from Canadian social work programs accredited by CASWE covered by the memorandum of understanding between CSWE and CASWE.
- c. Students may also contact the [regional accrediting body](#) that accredits institution they are interested in attending to inquire if there is a process for determining equivalency or recognizing the degree(s) previously received as comparable to a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree. As long as the regional accrediting body recognizes the degree as comparable, program may admit those students. Please note that while the CSWE-BOA accrediting body sets the minimum standards, it is completely within the purview of each accredited social work program to institute their own admission criteria and requirements. Most master's

social work programs admit students with a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree in any field of study. An accredited baccalaureate social work degree is not a CSWE-BOA requirement for admission to a master's social work program. However, students are encouraged to contact their program of interest directly to ensure they meet all admission criteria / requirements.

Field Education

24. How many field hours must I complete?

- a. Baccalaureate students must complete a minimum of 400 field education hours and master's students must complete a minimum of 900 field education hours. Advanced standing students must complete a minimum of 900 hours between their baccalaureate and master's social work programs. While the CSWE-BOA accrediting body determines the minimum standards, individual programs may elect to require hours above the minimum.

25. Can I have a paid social work field education placement?

- a. Neither the CSWE-BOA accrediting body nor the current set of standards prohibit a student from completing a paid field education placement.
- b. It is within the purview of each social work program to develop policies regarding field placements at the same organization at which a student is employed. We advise arranging a conversation with your program's field director as they may assist you in understanding your program's specific field education policies and procedures. Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).
- c. CSWE-BOA codified the following interpretation in the [2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#) under Accreditation Standard (AS) 2.2.11:
 - i. Student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours if the tasks have clear links to the social work competencies, including any competencies added by the program, and their related behaviors.
 - ii. The field instructor and employment supervisor of a student may be the same person. In such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment.
 - iii. While these options are permissible, each program has the autonomy, authority, and discretion to develop its own policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. These interpretations present options, not requirements.
- d. For additional information, access the [CSWE Statement on Paid Field Placements](#).

26. What are the required credentials for field instructors?

- a. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience in social work.
- b. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-master's social work practice experience (defined in the [2015 EPAS Glossary](#) 2015 EPAS Glossary; [2022 EPAS Interpretation Guide Glossary](#))
- c. While these are minimum required credentials, each accredited social work program may institute additional requirements.
- d. For cases in which a field instructor does not have the minimum required credentials, the social work program is responsible for developing and implementing a process to reinforce the social work perspective with students. This allows programs to work flexibly in rural settings, in cases where a credentialed field instructor leaves, with large agencies that have limited social workers onsite, or settings that are high quality yet do not have a social worker onsite.

27. How often must I meet with my field instructor?

- a. The frequency and format of field education supervision is within the purview of each accredited social work program. The program develops their expectations regarding field education supervision. We advise arranging a conversation with your program's field director as they may assist you in understanding your program's specific field education policies and procedures. Contact information for social work programs is located in the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

28. Is there a limit on the number of virtual in-person contact hours a program may permit students to count toward field hours?

- a. No, it is within each program's purview to determine a limit (if any) on virtual in-person contact hours. Placements can be completely virtual as long as there are clear links to the social work competencies, including any competencies added by the program, and their related behaviors.

29. Does CSWE determine what activities I will complete at my field placement?

- a. No. Roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for social work practice differ per field agency site. CSWE employs a competency-based education model where students learn the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive & effective processes necessary for generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and/or specialized practice within a certain area of specialization. Please refer to the social work competencies in the EPAS for more information regarding expected student learning outcomes in classroom and field settings.

Advanced Standing Status

30. I have a baccalaureate social work degree and want to enroll in an advanced standing program, is there a time limit to qualify?

- a. Each accredited master's social work program selects and implements their own criteria for issuing advanced standing status. At minimum advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE-BOA, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors (Canada).

31. Can I enter program as advanced standing status if I did not earn an accredited baccalaureate social work degree?

- a. No. An accredited baccalaureate social work degree is required to qualify for advanced standing status. Check your program's accredited status is the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

Accelerated Plans of Study

32. Does CSWE-BOA accelerated / cooperative / compressed / concurrent plans of study such as (4+1, 2+2, 3+2, etc.)?

- a. CSWE-BOA accredits social work programs with a variety of plans of study that meet the needs of their students. Due to the unique structure, administration, governance, and regional accreditation of each program, programs are empowered to innovate, and consult with their [program's accreditation specialist](#) to ensure the plan of study aligns with EPAS requirements.

Transfer Credits

33. Can I transfer credits to my new social work program?

- a. The accreditation process respects each institution's policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits. Thus, each accredited program may determine which (if any) courses may be transferred/waived from your previous studies.

Complaints

34. I have a complaint about my social work program, how do I file it with CSWE-BOA?

- a. Formal complaints to the accrediting body **must pertain to matters related to program compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**. CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA) is not authorized to adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual faculty or student grievances against a program. Complainants must use all appropriate institutional and professional channels of appeal before filing a formal complaint with CSWE.
- b. Please refer to complaint policies and procedures in **Policy 4.11 Complaints Regarding Program Compliance** in the [Accreditation Policies](#) for filing a complaint.

Self-Study, Benchmark, and Other Accreditation Documents

35. What academic year should be captured in the self-study?

- a. However, a more accurate framing is to consider the self-study as a rolling snapshot of where the program currently is; not reflecting back on previous or outdated operations and information.
- b. While the document may capture the year prior to submission of the self-study, the program should be cognizant to update their documents regarding any changes that strengthen compliance. The most frequent changes include composition of faculty, students, staff, other personnel, adding / removing program options, updated assessment data, updates to policies or procedures, or enhancements made to program operations to strengthen compliance with the EPAS. This list is not exhaustive, so it is important to ensure that all information, personnel, operations, program options, and data are captured in the self-study is current, accurate, and aligned with the EPAS.
- c. With regard to program personnel, the program should capture the most up-to-date information in the self-study to the best of their ability. This ensures the site visitor has access to current faculty and personnel information reflecting those with whom they will meet on campus during their visit.
- d. In the self-study, programs should capture all components they wish to have reaffirmed for compliance with the EPAS. Remember that programs are requesting the CSWE-BOA to affirm these operations for the next 8-years. So, the self-study should capture the program's best compliance plan that reflects current operations now and moving forward for the next 8-years. Note: review **Policy 4.9 Program Changes** in the [Accreditation Policies](#) for information on changes between review cycles.
- e. Submitting outdated information in the self-study, benchmark, or other accreditation documents may result in a citation or other action by the CSWE-BOA in order to request the most current and accurate program materials.

36. May I request a sample self-study, benchmark, or other accreditation-related document as a model?

- a. No. Per **Policy 4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications** in the [Accreditation Policies](#), accreditation staff do not share program-specific information with other programs for any purpose, including independent scholarly research. Staff do not share program contact information, program lists, accreditation spreadsheets, or other individualized program information not already publicly available on the CSWE website and [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).
- b. The accreditation team has worked diligently and are proud to provide high quality [services](#), content, trainings and workshops, publications, presentations, templates, tools, sample matrices, resources, and more to provide clear, proactive, and transparent support throughout the accreditation process and in-between review cycles. Check out all offerings on the [CSWE accreditation webpage](#).
- c. The accreditation team recommends utilizing the Self-Study / Initial Accreditation Optional Self-Study Template, Benchmark 1 Optional Template, or Benchmark 2 Optional Template as well as the Interpretation Guide to support your accreditation goals and processes.
- d. A variety of [trainings and workshops](#) are also available to help programs understand, implement, and document compliance with the EPAS.
- e. Providing samples is not a common nor advisable practice amongst accreditors as programs are encouraged to implement and document compliance with the EPAS creatively according to their program's unique context. This allows for innovation, experimentation, and continuous quality improvement to thrive.
- f. Since each program is reviewed independently, replicating a program that passed an accreditation review does not guarantee the same outcome for your program.
- g. Programs may elect to share sample documents amongst themselves, however, please remember that CSWE's [Department of Social Work Accreditation \(DOSWA\)](#) is the only trusted, verified, and accurate source of accreditation information.

37. Can I copy and paste our program's previous self-study as a baseline for our next self-study?

- a. We do not advise using your program's previous self-study as the foundation for the next self-study. The program will be writing to a new set of standards with different requirements and interpretations. A fresh canvas, new perspectives, and approaching this as a continuous quality improvement and renewal process is advisable.
- b. A variety of [trainings and workshops](#) as well as [presentations](#) are also available to help programs understand, implement, and document compliance with the EPAS.

Post-degree Training and Employment

38. Which type of degree is most favored by employers? Will employers differentiate between an online degree versus a degree obtained in-person?

- a. CSWE does not rank, recommend, nor comment on the quality of accredited programs. All accredited programs must meet the current set of standards. As an accrediting body, CSWE-BOA maintains ethical boundaries and impartiality. We do offer a variety of resources to assist in selecting an accredited program. CSWE houses the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). You are encouraged to utilize the Directory, which is sortable by a number of features, as you reflect on your career goals and make an informed decision about your educational journey.
- b. The professional job market is an ever-shifting landscape. CSWE nor the accrediting body compare or rank types of program delivery methods, such as online and in-person. When attending a CSWE-BOA-accredited program, delivery method does not impact educational quality. All accredited programs, regardless of delivery method, are required to demonstrate compliance with the same set of standards. Thus, if your employer requires a CSWE-BOA-accredited degree, there is no difference between whether the degree was earned on-campus or online, from our perspective. It is CSWE-accredited.

39. What post-degree training opportunities exist?

- a. Beginning in 2021, CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA), in partnership with the Fellowship Review Committee (FRC), began accrediting post-master's social work fellowship programs. Fellowship programs are hosted by sites offering social work services in the United States, its territories, or on U.S. military installations and advance the knowledge and skills of a social work practitioner in a focused area of practice. Through completion of a fellowship program, trainees obtain advanced competencies and/or core expertise and skills beyond those attained through completion of a master's degree in social work. Unlike the academic programs accredited by CSWE-BOA, fellowship programs are practice-based and not tied to degree programs in colleges and universities. The purpose of fellowship training is for trainees to obtain advanced competencies and/or core expertise and skills beyond those attained through completion of a master's degree in social work. More information regarding post-master's social work fellowship accreditation can be found [here](#).

Site Visits & Commissioner Visits

40. Are reaffirmation site visits and candidacy commissioner conducted virtually or onsite?

- a. All reaffirmation site visits are conducted onsite.
- b. For candidacy programs:
 - i. Benchmark 1: All commissioner visits are conducted onsite. However, visits for online-only* programs are conducted virtually.

- ii. Benchmark 2: All commissioner visits are conducted virtually.
- iii. Benchmark 3: All commissioner visits are conducted onsite. However, visits for online-only* programs are conducted virtually.

*Online-only is defined as holding all regular weekly classes online without regular location-based components. Programs with an annual on-campus component are still considered as online-only. Online-only programs may elect to request an in-person visit in lieu of a virtual visit. Expectations are consistent for both in-person and virtual visit formats.

Post-Degree Licensing

41. I have questions regarding licensure. Who can I speak to at CSWE?

- a. CSWE staff do not discuss licensure. Professional social work licensure post-degree is under the authority of a designated board within each individual state government. Your state government is responsible for regulating licensure and setting criteria required to become a licensed professional social worker. Requirements may differ by state. Contact information for individual state licensing boards can be found on the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\) website](#) or through an internet search for a licensing board for a particular state. Questions regarding licensure and professional practice should be directed to the board in your state. Questions regarding the national social work licensing exams should be directed to the ASWB, the body that publishes and administers the exams.

42. Does CSWE-BOA accredit courses required for licensure?

- a. No. CSWE-BOA accredits social work education programs not individual courses. Questions regarding post-degree licensure requirements and professional practice should be directed to the [social work board](#) in your state.

43. Can CSWE connect me with a supervisor per the licensing requirements in my state?

- a. No, this is not a service provided by CSWE as licensing requirements is within the sole jurisdiction of the social work licensing board in your state. You may also consider contacting the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) or the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#) state chapter in your area regarding potential supervisors related to licensing requirements.

44. If I complete an online social work program or a program outside of my state, will I be able to get a license after graduation?

- a. First, verify your program's accredited status by visiting the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#). Second, note that accreditation and post-degree licensure are completely separate regulations.
- b. When attending a CSWE-BOA-accredited program, delivery method does not impact educational quality. All accredited social work programs must meet the same accreditation standards. Thus, if your state-based social work licensing board requires a CSWE-BOA-accredited degree, there is no difference between

whether the degree was earned on-campus or online / in-state or out-of-state, from our perspective. It is CSWE-BOA accredited.

- c. Programs with online options work with their state higher education authority and regional accreditor to set the scope (regional, national, international, etc.) of their operations. CSWE's Board of Accreditation (BOA) nor the standards determine the program's scope. It is within each accredited program's purview to solicit and gain approval to operate within their desired scope. Our directory is not sortable by a "regional, national, or international scope" feature.
- d. Programs may verify their approvals to operate within their desired scope by checking with the following entities / bodies: institution (university or college), institution's accreditation compliance office / officer, any federal / U.S. Department of Education contact, regional accreditor, and / or state-based higher education authority.
- e. Continue working with your program to determine if you are able to complete the degree requirements in your state of residence. For example, your licensing board may require certain courses, training, etc. in order to become licensed after graduation. Such requirements are set by your state, not CSWE. Check whether the requirements of your state and your chosen program are compatible by working with your state-based social work licensing board.
- a. CSWE staff do not discuss licensing. Professional social work licensure post-degree is under the authority of a designated board within each individual state government. Your state government is responsible for regulating licensure and setting criteria required to become a licensed professional social worker. Requirements may differ by state. Contact information for individual state licensing boards can be found on the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\) website](#) or through an internet search for a licensing board for a particular state. Questions regarding licensure and professional practice should be directed to the board in your state. Questions regarding the national social work licensing exams should be directed to the ASWB, the body that publishes and administers the exams.

List of Social Work Programs

45. I am conducting research or interested in marketing a product/service to accredited social work programs. May I have a downloadable list or spreadsheet of social work programs with contact information?

- a. No, as an accrediting agency and membership organization, CSWE does not share contact information for research nor marketing purposes. Additionally, due to continuous changes in the accreditation status of social work programs, CSWE does not provide a spreadsheet of accredited programs. The [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) is searchable, updated monthly, and the most accurate mechanism for verifying accredited status or connecting with a program.
- b. **Policy 4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications** in the [Accreditation Policies](#) explains that accreditation staff do not share program-specific information for any purpose, including independent scholarly research, such as program contact information, program lists, accreditation spreadsheets, or other individualized program information not already publicly available on the CSWE website and [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

Networking & Accreditation News

46. What opportunities do social work students and educators have to network at CSWE?

- a. All social work community members are welcome to create a profile and join [CSWE Spark](#) discussion board.
- b. CSWE's signature [Annual Program Meeting \(APM\)](#) conference is open to all in the social work education community.
- c. Field directors may join [CSWE's Council on Field Education Spark online community](#).
- d. External opportunities to connect include the [Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors \(BPD\) electronic mailing list](#), [National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work electronic mailing list \(for members only\)](#), and the [National Association of Social Work MyNASW community discussion board \(for members only\)](#).

47. Does CSWE have a listserv so that I can stay current on accreditation news?

- a. No. CSWE maintains direct contact with members and accredited programs rather than using opt-in listservs. All accreditation-related news is sent directly to each program's primary contact's inbox per **Policy 4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications** in the [Accreditation Policies](#). The accreditation team also maintains a publicly available [Accreditation News Archive](#).