



# It's time to act.

*Championing Disability Justice  
and Disability Joy in Social Work*

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# Practice Doctorate Program Accreditation Info Session

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# CSWE Ideology

## Land Acknowledgement

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) acknowledges the ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawai'i, and territories.

### **Vision**

To ensure a well-educated social work profession equipped to advocate for and promote education, health, well-being, universal rights, and justice in a diverse world.

### **Mission**

To advance excellence and innovation in social work education, by providing leadership and scholarship, to ensure quality in teaching and learning, supporting critical thinking and advocacy to strengthen the capacity of our membership.

[Learn more here.](#)

# Meet Your Presenters



Kat Gibson Ledl, BSW, LMSW-Macro  
Director of Accreditation Services



Connie Adams, BSW, MSW, LCSW  
Accreditation Training Manager

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# Housekeeping

- **Post-conference** | Slide deck available for download at: [cswe.org/accreditationtraining](https://cswe.org/accreditationtraining)
- QR codes in slides, *ready your phones if desired!*
- We encourage self-care during this session



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# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Accreditation Overview
3. Accreditation Resources
4. Questions, Comments, & Curiosities

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# Learning Objectives

- Learn the benefits of practice doctorate program accreditation and its impact on the social work profession.
- Understand the accreditation process for new and existing practice doctorate programs.
- Know how to access the Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit, including application materials and standard interpretations.

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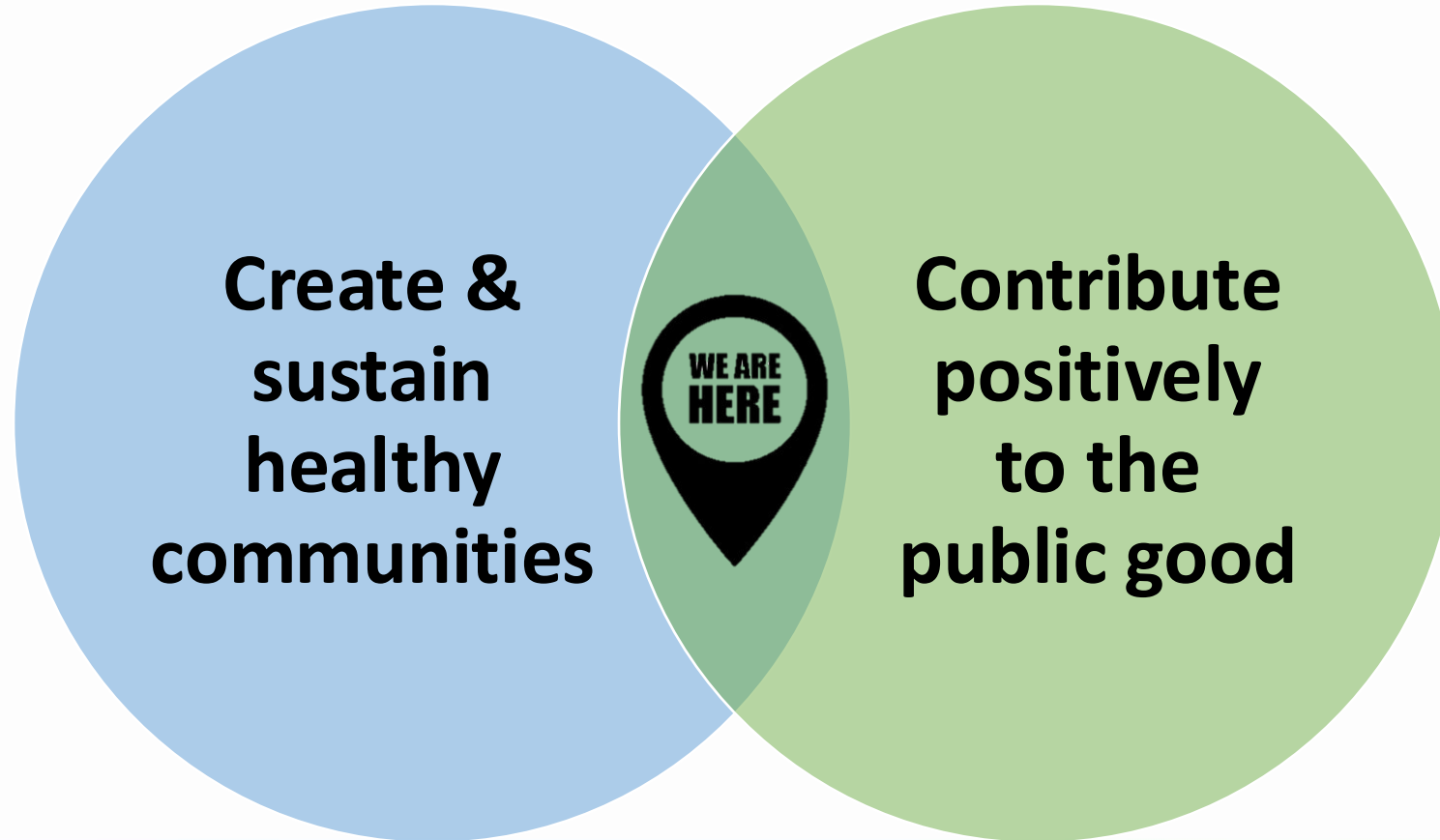
# Purpose of Accreditation

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# Core of Social Work Education

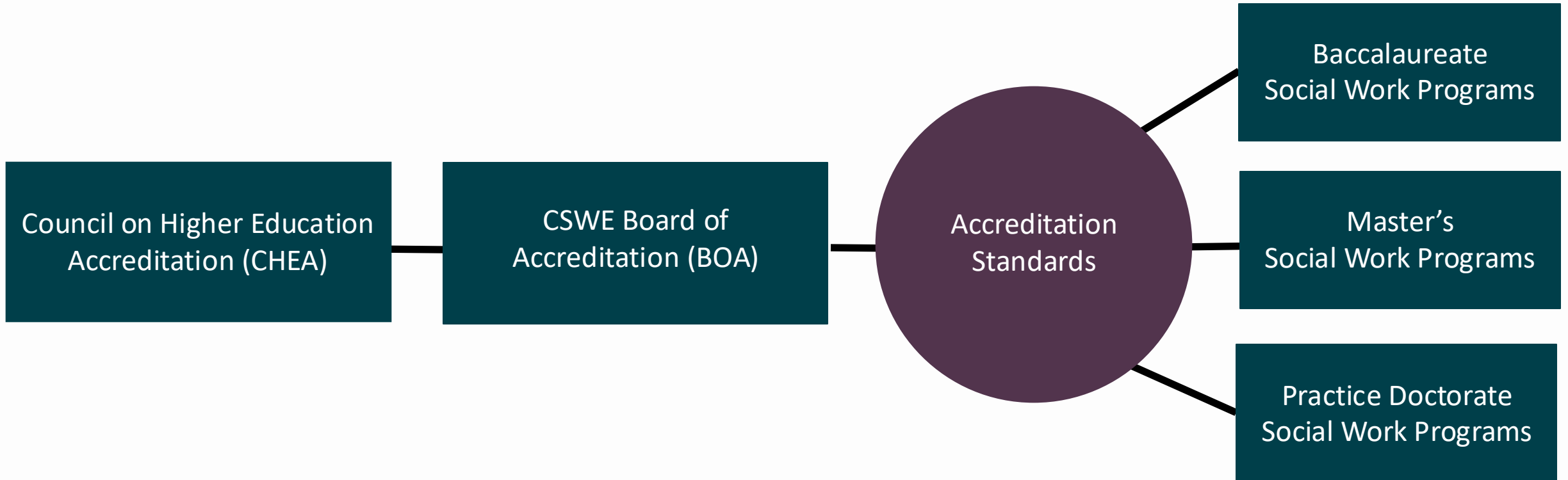


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# Social Work Education Accreditation



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# Peer-Review Process



- Accreditation is a peer-review
- Multi-modality ensuring context remains key to storytelling
- Multi-phase allowing for due process
- BOA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance
  - *CSWE staff cannot determine compliance*

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# Minimum Compliance

- Considered the quality threshold.
- Meet minimum requirements using the national standards, Interpretation Guide, and other BOA-sanctioned materials.
- Flexibility to craft excellent educational experiences that exceed the minimum requirements.
- CSWE-BOA sets the floor via the standards; programs set the ceiling!



*The sky is  
the limit!*

# Accreditation as a Team Effort

- Team-based approaches are highly encouraged!

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# CSWE Accreditation Pathways

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# Accreditation Pathways



TRADITIONAL  
3-YEAR  
PATHWAY

TEMPORARY 1-  
YEAR  
PATHWAY

# Applying for Accreditation: Two Pathways

**1) Temporary Alternative Pathway:** 1-year initial accreditation process for existing practice doctorate programs



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# Applying for Accreditation: Two Pathways

**1) Temporary Alternative Pathway:** 1-year initial accreditation process for existing practice doctorate programs

**2) Traditional Pathway:** 3-year process for new and developing practice doctorate programs

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# Rationale

The Temporary Alternative Pathway was developed in recognition that practice doctorate programs have **longstanding operational history** and pilot participation was limited by design.

Therefore, this pathway allows existing practice doctorate programs an **expedited** candidacy and initial accreditation option.

# Temporary Alternative Pathway

- Not a developmental process
- Must be ready to evidence full compliance with all standards

# Temporary Pathway Eligibility

## Eligibility:

1. have secured all appropriate levels of approval and permissions to operate;
2. are fully operational (**by August 1, 2025**); and
3. have issued at least one (1) practice doctorate social work degree by **August 1, 2025**.

***Does your program meet all of the above eligibility criteria to pursue the Temporary Alternative Pathway?***

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# Both Pathways: First Steps

1. Identify your program's pathway
2. Identify a retroactive accreditation date
3. Identify corresponding BOA meeting agenda and timetable
4. Review pathway's eligibility application and templates
5. *Optional:* Attend drop-in Q&A sessions

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# Retroactive Accreditation

Per policy 5.2 Retroactive Accredited Status in the [Accreditation Policy Handbook](#):

*Only students admitted to the social work program during or after the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy will be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program, once the program achieves initial accreditation as granted by the Board of Accreditation (BOA).*

*Students admitted prior to the academic year in which the program was granted candidacy will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited social work education program, regardless of the program's accredited status when they graduate.*

# Accreditation Resources

## 2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards

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# Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit

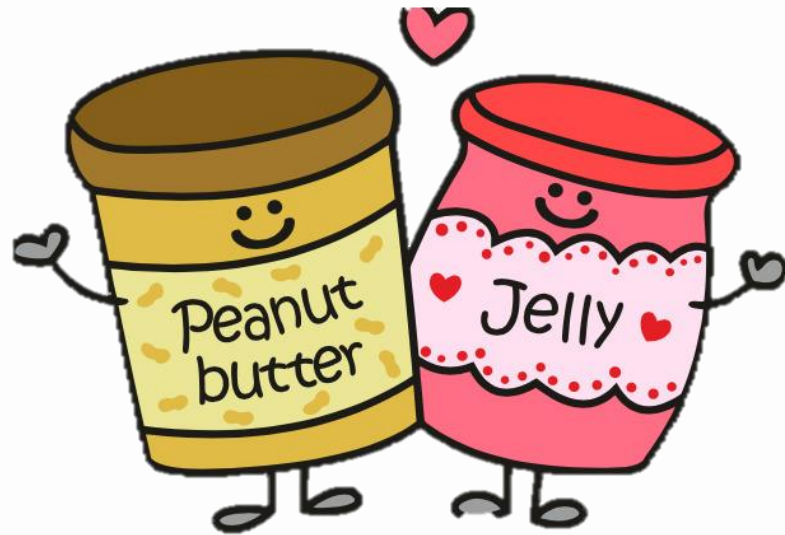


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# Interpretation Guide (IG)



**EPAS + IG = Dynamic Duo**

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# Candidacy Benchmark Grid

**Applicable to traditional pathway programs only.**

- The [Candidacy Benchmark Grid](#) identifies which standards due for each benchmark:
  - In development
  - For approval
  - In compliance

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## Candidacy Process: 3-year Benchmark Grid

<b>2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs</b>	Candidacy Visit 1 for Benchmark 1		Candidacy Visit 2 for Benchmark 2		Candidacy Visit 3 for Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation
	<b>Approved to Proceed to Benchmark 2</b>	<b>Developmental</b>	<b>Approved to Proceed to Benchmark 3</b>	<b>Developmental</b>	<b>All Standards Evaluated for Compliance</b>
1 – Program Mission	AS D1.0.1 AS D1.0.2		AS D1.0.1 AS D1.0.2		AS D1.0.1 AS D1.0.2
2 – Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (A DEI)		AS D2.0.1 AS D2.0.2	AS D2.0.1 AS D2.0.2		AS D2.0.1 AS D2.0.2

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# Student & Alumni Toolkit

[www.cswe.org/PD/alumnitoolkit](http://www.cswe.org/PD/alumnitoolkit)

*For practice doctorate students graduating from programs not (currently) accredited by CSWE*

**Step 1:** Search in the CSWE Directory of Accredited Programs

**Step 2:** Review the Memo to the Social Work Profession

**Step 3:** Read our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Step 4:** Research Licensure Implications

**Step 5:** Explore Implications for Employment in Academia

**Step 6:** Insert Language on Your Cover Letters or Applications



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# 2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards

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# **Explicit Curriculum (AS D3.0.1)**

# Core Expertise & Skills

- **Core Expertise and Skill 1:** Advance practice through innovative approaches
- **Core Expertise and Skill 2:** Use and critically evaluate research and knowledge
- **Core Expertise and Skill 3:** Engage in scientific inquiry that reflects doctoral-level scholarship
- **Core Expertise and Skill 4:** Develop and disseminate practice-relevant, research-informed knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration

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# Core Expertise & Skills

- **Core Expertise and Skill 5:** Provide leadership in social work practice and/or education
- **Core Expertise and Skill 6:** Develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice
- ***Optional:* Core Expertise and Skill #:** Title of additional core expertise and skill

# Explicit Curriculum: Focus

## *Focus of AS D3.0.1:*

- Explain the formal curriculum design elements, required courses, rationale for the design, ***and*** explain how professional practice communities are engaged and their impact on curriculum content, development, and delivery.

# Curriculum Design Rationale

Describe the program's curriculum design, including:

Explanation of theories and concepts that inform formal design

List of required courses: Course number and title

Discuss when courses offered in broader design

Describe how each course influences and builds

Explain student progression

# Curriculum Design Rationale

Describe the program's curriculum design, including:

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# Doctoral Substantive Expertise

- ***Compliance Statement d:***
  - For each area of focus, the program describes how students are prepared for substantive expertise beyond the master's level in one or more areas of social work practice.

# Doctoral Substantive Expertise

- ***Compliance Statement d:***
  - For each area of focus, the program describes how students are *prepared for substantive expertise beyond the master's level* in one or more areas of social work practice.

# Examples of Advancing Practice

- Applied academic product
- Leadership immersion experience
- Implemented project
- Provide consultation to an organization on area of expertise/focus
- Publish on dissertation
- Student teaching
- Preceptorships or residencies

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# Form AS D3.0.1 | Curriculum Matrix

*[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheading and develop a separate matrix for each area of focus.]*

**Area of Focus Name:** **Insert text here**

## **Core Expertise and Skill 1: Advance practice through innovative approaches**

<b>Course Number &amp; Title</b>	<b>Title and Description of How Course Content Implements the Core Expertise and Skill</b>	<b>Page Number in Volume 2 Syllabi</b>
	Title of specific required course content  Brief description of required course content that clearly links the content to the core expertise and skill	#
Insert a new row for each identified course content	Title of specific required course content  Brief description of required course content that clearly links the content to the core expertise and skill	#

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# Curriculum Matrix

- Matrix content must match the syllabus content.
- Don't include elective courses or elective course content
- Don't need to include all required courses
- Identical content is taught across all sections, even by different instructors.

# **Explicit Curriculum (AS D3.0.2)**

# Academic Product Examples

- Capstone project
- Dissertation

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# Mentorship

- ***Compliance statement c:***
  - For each area of focus, the program describes how faculty provide mentorship and supervise student academic product(s).

# Mentorship Definition

- ***Mentorship:***
  - Practice doctorate program faculty support the individualized professional development of each practitioner-scholar and supervise students' academic product(s).

# Mentorship Examples

- Mentorship examples include providing:
  - Tools
  - Resources
  - Supports
  - Feedback

AND/OR

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# Mentorship Examples

- Mentorship examples include providing:
  - Social capital
  - Access to a broader network to successfully navigate the academic program, complete the degree, and/or prepare for post-degree pursuits

# **Explicit Curriculum (AS D3.0.3)**

# Doctoral Leadership

- ***Compliance statement a:***
  - The program provides its definition of doctoral leadership

# **Assessment: Core Expertise & Skills**

## **[AS D5.0.1(a)]**

# Core Expertise & Skills Assessment

## *Focus of AS D5.0.1(a):*

- Is the curriculum effective at developing practitioner-scholars with substantive expertise and skills in their area of focus?

# Core Expertise & Skills Assessment

- Key differences between *curriculum matrix* (**AS D3.0.1**) and the *student achievement assessment plan* [**AS D5.0.1(a-d)**]
  - **Curriculum Matrix** = guaranteeing / delivering consistent content
  - **Student Achievement Assessment Plan** = demonstrating/assessing practitioner-scholars to advance practice & innovate

# Core Expertise & Skills Assessment

- Key differences between *curriculum matrices (AS D3.0.1)* and the *student achievement assessment plan [AS D5.0.1(a-d)]*
  - **Curriculum Matrix = guaranteeing / delivering consistent content**
  - Student Achievement Assessment Plan = demonstrating/assessing practitioner-scholars to advance practice & innovate

# Core Expertise & Skills Assessment

- Key differences between *curriculum matrices (AS D3.0.1)* and the *student achievement assessment plan [AS D5.0.1(a-d)]*
  - Curriculum Matrix = guaranteeing / delivering consistent content
  - **Student Achievement Assessment Plan = demonstrating/assessing practitioner-scholars to advance practice & innovate**

# Components of the Plan

The plan must include:

Descriptions of instruments

Explanation of implementation

Details of when each core expertise and skill is assessed

Identification of assessor of each core expertise and skill

Explanation of expected level of student achievement

Copies of each instrument

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Descriptions of instruments

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Explanation of expected level of student achievement

Copies of each instrument

# Form AS D5.0.1(a)

*[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheading and develop a separate plan for each area of focus.]*

## Student Achievement Assessment Plan

**Area of Focus:** Name of Area of Focus

**Core Expertise and Skill 1:** Advance practice through innovative approaches

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# Form AS D5.0.1(a)

Instrument Name	How Each Instrument is Implemented	When Students are Assessed	Instrument Assesses Student Demonstration of Core Expertise and Skills Through the Process of the Student Developing the Required Academic Product(s)?	Student Assessment Completed By:	Instrument: Expected Level of Achievement	Core Expertise and Skill 1: Expected Level of Achievement
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			% inclusive of all instruments
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Insert a new row for each additional instrument, otherwise delete this row			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Merge final column if additional instruments are added

# Considerations for Instruments

- Programs have autonomy to select 2 instruments per CES:
  - One instrument to assess each core expertise and skill via student demonstration through the process of the student developing the required academic product(s).
  - One instrument to assess each core expertise and skill elsewhere the program chooses.

# Omit from Rubrics & Instruments

- Cannot include “Not Applicable” or “No Opportunity” categories
- Do not include items that do not directly assess the core expertise. For example:
  - APA formatting
  - Timely submission
  - Grammar

# Instrument Requirements

- On each rubric, clearly label on the instrument which core expertise and skill each **rubric line item** is capturing.
- Programs must provide specific **criteria** for the basis of CES-based assessment (e.g., rubric line items).

# Considerations for Instruments

- What exactly must the student demonstrate or show the assessor?
  - What must be observed by the assessor?
- What earns a high score, middle score, or low score?

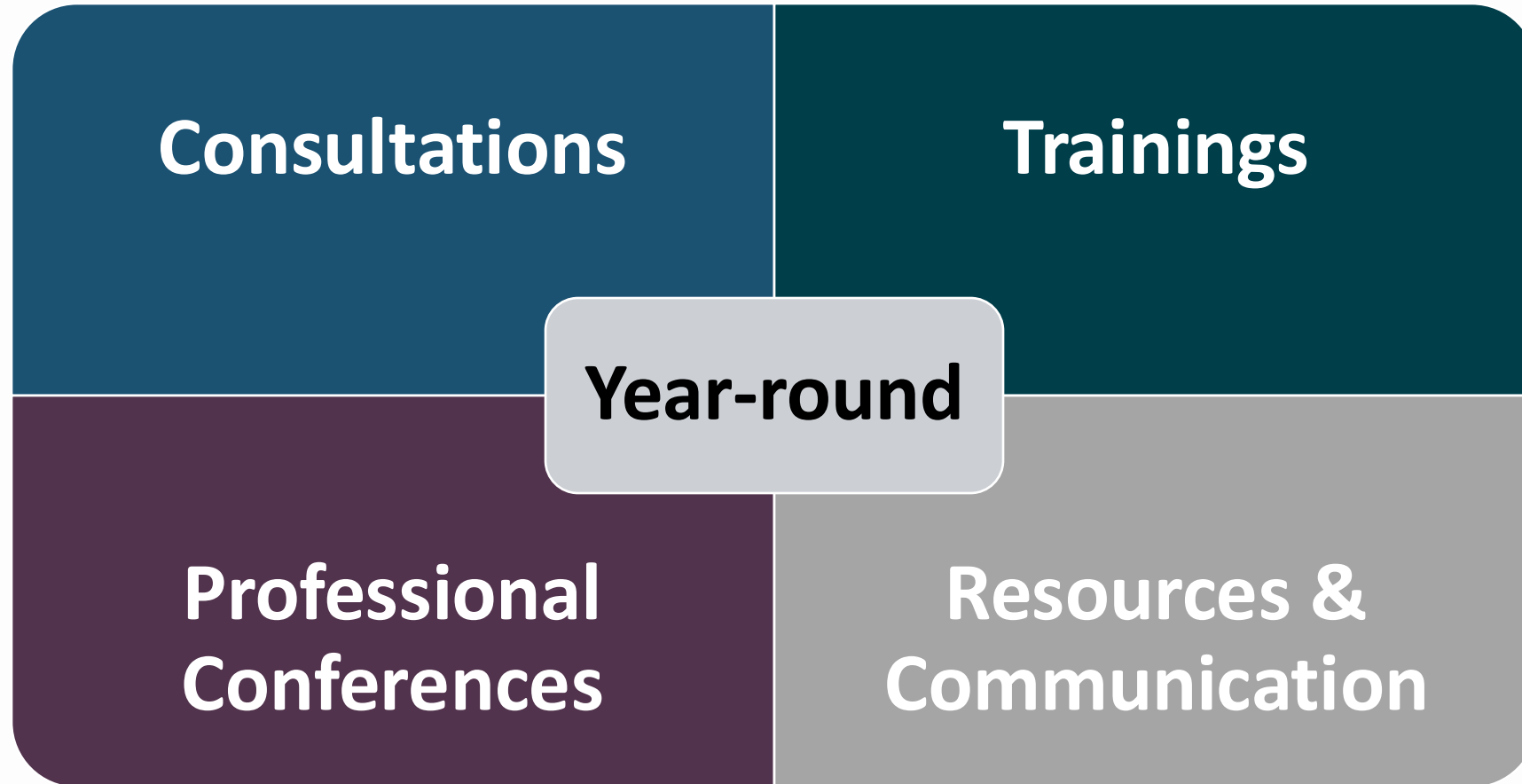
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# Accreditation Services



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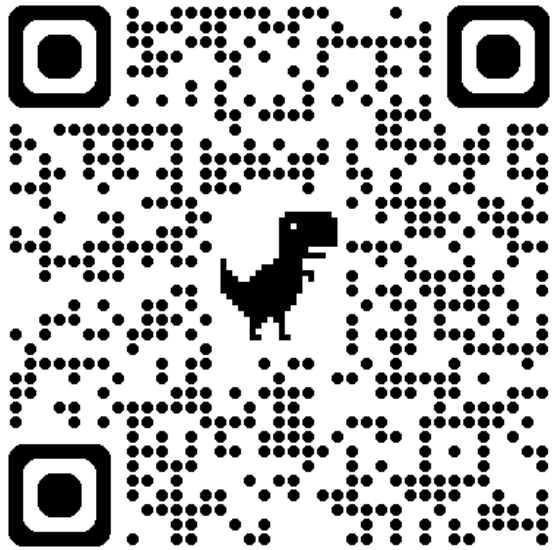
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# Accreditation Updates Webinar

Wed., November 5, 2025  
1:00-2:00pm (EST)



- “Office hours” with accreditation leadership
- Timely updates on interpretations, policies, resources, training, services, volunteer perks, and *so much more!*
- Q&A
- Questions welcome via the [registration form](#)

*Join us!*

*Webinar will not be recorded due to interactive nature.*

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# Stay Connected to CSWE

- CSWE internal database
  - Listed by program
  - Each program has 1 primary contact
  - [Practice Doctorate Program Audit Form](#)
- [CSWE Directory of Accredited Programs](#)
  - Activated when program granted pre-candidacy/candidacy status

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# Meet Your Interim Accreditation Contact



## Accreditation Contact

for Temporary Alternative Pathway:

Kat Gibson-Ledl, BSW, LMSW-Macro

Director of Accreditation Services

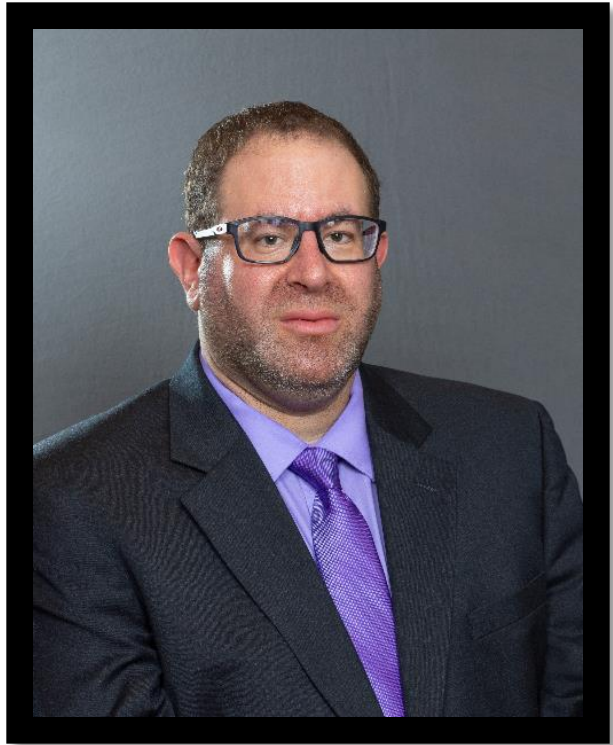
[kgibson@cswe.org](mailto:kgibson@cswe.org)

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# Meet Your Interim Accreditation Contact



**Accreditation Contact  
for Traditional Pathway:**

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Accreditation Services Manager

[Mleff@cswe.org](mailto:Mleff@cswe.org)

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# Questions, Comments, & Curiosities



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# Gratitude from Your Facilitators



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Accreditation Training Manager

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Kat Gibson-Ledl, BSW, LMSW-Macro  
Director of Accreditation Services

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# Additional Resources

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# Purpose of Accreditation

**The purposes of accreditation are:**

Quality assurance

Academic improvement

Professional preparation

Public accountability

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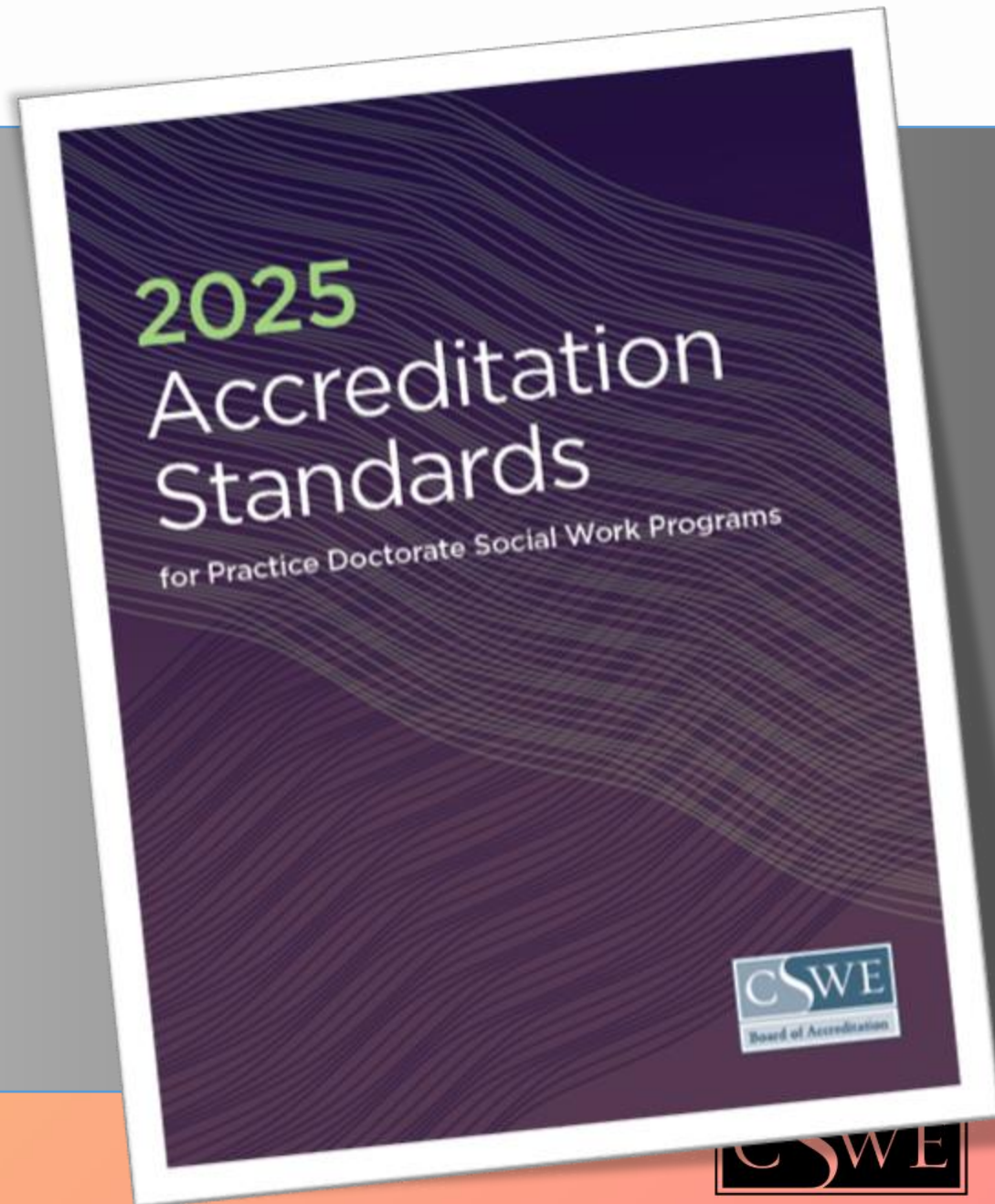
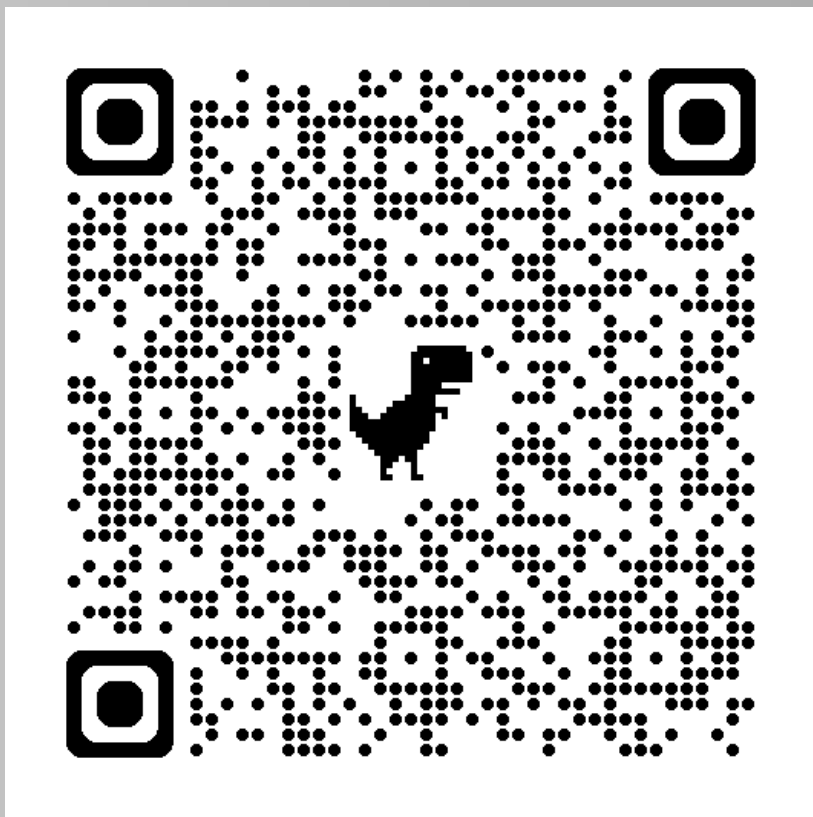
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# Social Work Education Continuum

Programs Accredited by the CSWE Board of Accreditation			Accredited by Institutional Accreditors*
<p><b>Baccalaureate Social Work Degree</b> Generalist Practice</p> <p><i>Competency-based Education Model</i></p>	<p><b>Master's Social Work Degree</b> Specialized Practice</p> <p><i>Competency-based Education Model</i></p>	<p><b>Practice Doctorate Social Work Degree</b> Doctoral Practice</p> <p><i>Practitioner-Scholar Perspective</i></p>	<p><b>Research Doctorate Degree   PhD</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework.</li> <li>To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners <b>use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</b>, based on scientific inquiry and best practices.</li> <li>The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.</li> <li>They engage in research informed practice and are proactive in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an ability to <b>engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate across client populations, problem areas, and methods of intervention.</b></li> <li>Extends and enhances the nine social work competencies that are demonstrated in observable behaviors indicative of competence in specialized areas of professional practice.</li> <li>Specialized practitioners synthesize and use the knowledge and skills necessary for interprofessional collaborations based on scientific inquiry and best practices, consistent with social work values.</li> <li>They engage in both research and advocacy in their commitment to changing structural inequities and to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Develop, translate, and advance social work practice knowledge;</b> use and evaluate research-informed practice critically to translate and innovate social work practice; engage in systematic inquiry; and apply and disseminate research-informed knowledge, values, ethics, and skills in social work through practice, professional leadership, and/or teaching.</li> <li>Core expertise and skills:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advance practice through innovative approaches;</li> <li>use and critically evaluate research and knowledge;</li> <li>engage in scientific inquiry that reflects doctoral level scholarship;</li> <li>develop and disseminate practice-relevant research-informed knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching,</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Aims to prepare students to be <b>scientists, scholars, and stewards of the discipline.</b>”</li> <li>“Prepare graduates to develop substantive knowledge in an area of specialization, be able to conduct independent research, and have transferable skills and competencies for productive employability.”</li> </ul>

*Copy of standards available on the [CSWE website](#) (since March 31, 2025)*



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# Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards



Home / Accreditation / Standards, Policies, Processes / Practice Doctorate Program Accreditation / Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards

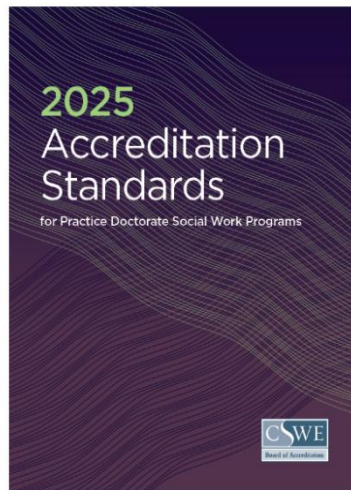
Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards

Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit

FAQs

Accreditation Pilot

## 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs



The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is pleased to announce the approval and release of the 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs. The accreditation standards were developed and approved by the Board of Accreditation (BOA) on February 6, 2025.

[2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards\\*](#)

[2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit](#)

**\*Advance copy - version of document with graphic design forthcoming.**



# Memo to the Social Work Profession



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK  
*Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education*

333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400, Alexandria, VA 22314 TEL 703.683.8080 FAX 703.683.8099 www.cswe.org

## **Memo to the Social Work Profession Regarding Practice Doctorate Program Accreditation**

**March 31, 2025**

Dear social work colleagues, clients, constituents, and public interests,

In social work education, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA) 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. Since its inception in July 1952 (and its predecessor since 1919), CSWE has accredited master's programs. In 1974, CSWE began accrediting baccalaureate programs.

In recent years, the number of practice doctorate programs has grown from 5 in [2014](#) to 38 in 2024, and continues to grow according to a recent audit of social work programs conducted by CSWE. In response to questions regarding how practice doctorate degrees align within the [social work education continuum](#), CSWE partnered with social work programs, social work educators and leaders, doctoral students, health accreditors, and other constituents to conduct an environmental scan, gather data and feedback, and create [pilot accreditation standards](#) prior to launching the accreditation pilot.

- Announces Practice Doctorate Program Accreditation
- Social Work Education Continuum
- Retroactive Accreditation Status & Career Implications for Graduates
- Call to Action

# ADEI Webpage

## CSWE ADEI webpage with centralized information.

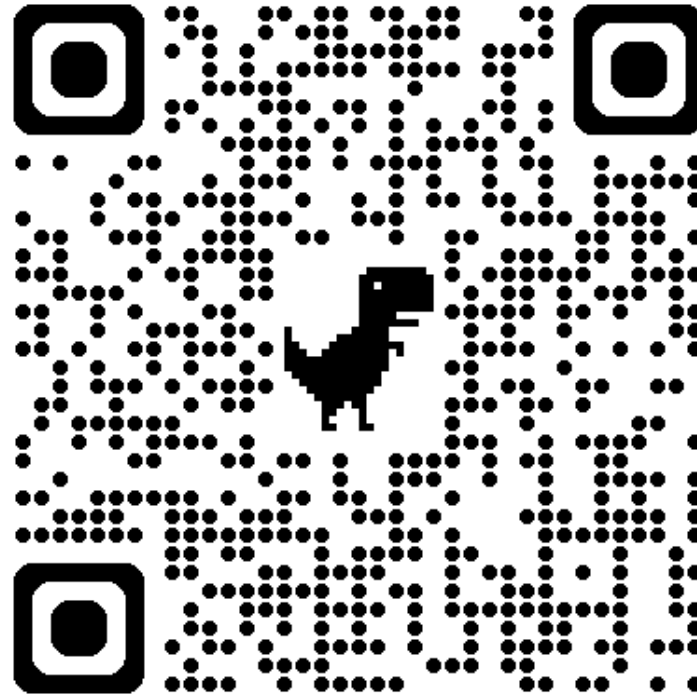
- [Membership login](#) credentials are required to access the webpage
- Only accessible to program primary contacts and members
  - [Simply Join CSWE/Link to a Program](#)
- Inclusive of accredited, candidate, applicant, and practice doctorate programs

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# Membership Login Page



<https://membership.cswe.org/ADEI-Resources>

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# Members-only View

membership.cswe.org/Membership/userId/6410



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Katie Gibson-Ledl | Logout



Site Visitor Resources

**ADEI Resources**



 Join

[Link to Program / Join CSWE](#)

# Writing Methods, Strategies, & Tips

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# Framework

*Accreditation documents tell your program's story as guided by the national standards*

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# Writing Style & Formatting

- Write succinctly and clearly
- Ensure accurate and complete at time of submission
- BOA cannot make any assumptions
- Ease the process for the reader
- Review and use *policy 4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements* in the [Accreditation Policy Handbook](#)

# Writing Style & Formatting

- Use subheadings!
  - Consider **Bolding** and *Italicizing* for emphasis/clarity
- For each benchmark and self-study:
  - Volume 1 (required template)
  - Volume 2
  - Volume 3
  - No appendices, no hyperlinks

# Writing Style & Formatting

- Do not embed documents
- Will not visit websites for review beyond required by AS directly

# Writing to an Accreditation Standard

- Stay grounded in the purpose of the standard
- Write to each element/component of the standard
- Many citations result from missing or unclear content
- Explicitly address each program option in response to each standard
- Program-specific (e.g., practice doctorate program) rather than institution- or department-level